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THE

MONKS OF THE WEST

FROM ST BENEDICT TO ST BERNARD

BY

THE COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

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FIDE ET VERITATE

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Why was the rule of St Columbanus rejected and replaced by that of St Benedict? The Council of Autun acknowledges only the latter. The Council of Rome in 610 confirmed it. It was identified with the authority of the Holy See, and thus succeeded in governing all,

BOOK IV.

ST BENEDICT.

SUMMARY.

State of Europe at the end of the fifth century: debased by the Empire, divided by heresy, and ravaged by the invasions of the Barbarians. — St Benedict was born in 480, and went into seclusion at Subiaco, the cradle of monastic life.—His trials.—His miracles.—His departure for Monte Cassino: he founds there the principal sanctuary of the monastic order. — Note on the description and history of Mont Cassino.—Life at Cassino.—Relations with the nobility.—Solicitude for the people.—Influence over the Goths.—History of Galla.—Interview with Totila.—The Lombards.—St Scholastica.—Death of Benedict.—Analysis of his rule: the first made for the West.—Preamble.—Two dominant ideas.—Work.—Obedience qualified by the nature and origin of the command. — Analogy with the feudal system.—Conditions of the community thus organised.—Abdication of individual property.—Noviciate.—Vow of stability.—Roman wisdom and moderation.—Analysis of the details.—Liturgy.—Food.—Clothing.—Penalties.—Services.—Hospitality.—The Sick.—Summary of the rule by Bossuet.—Benedict's vision of the world in a single ray.—He did not foresee the social results of his work.—Immensity of these results.—The world is reconquered from the Barbarians by the monks.

BOOK IV.

ST BENEDICT.

. . Gli occhi dirizzai
E vidi cento sperule ch' insieme
Più s' abellivan con mutui rai.
Io stava come quei ch' in se repreme
La punta del disio e non s' attenta
Di dimandar, sì del troppo si teme.
E la maggiore e la più luculenta
Di quelle margherite innanzi fessi
Per far di se la mia voglia contenta.
Paradiso, c. xxii.

I.—HIS LIFE.

ST BENEDICT was born in the year of our Lord 480. Europe has perhaps never known a more calamitous or apparently desperate period than that which reached its climax at this date.

State of Europe at the end of the fifth century.

Confusion, corruption, despair, and death, were everywhere; social dismemberment seemed complete. Authority, morals, laws, sciences, arts, religion herself, might have been supposed condemned to irremediable ruin. The germs of a splendid and approaching revival were still hidden from all eyes under the ruins of a crumbling world. The Church was more than ever infected by heresy, schisms, and divisions, which the obscure successors of St Leo the Great in the Holy See endeavoured

in vain to repress. In all the ancient Roman world there did not exist a prince who was not either a pagan, an Arian, or a Eutychian. The monastic institution, after having given so many doctors and saints to the Church in the East, was drifting toward that descent which it never was doomed to reascend; and even in the West, as has just been seen, some symptoms of premature decay had already appeared. Thus, indeed, the monks gave too often an example of disorder and scandal as well as the rest of the clergy.

In temporal affairs, the political edifice originated by Augustus—that monster assemblage of two hundred millions of human creatures, "of whom not a single individual was entitled to call himself free"—was crumbling into dust under the blows of the Barbarians.

In the West, the last imperial phantom had just disappeared. Odoacer, the chief of the Herules, had snatched the purple of the Cæsars from the shoulders of Augustulus in 476, but disdained himself to put it on. He had succeeded in filling up the sink of pollution which called itself the Roman Empire, and in which, for five centuries, the glory and strength of ancient Rome, and the blood and substance of the world conquered by her arms, had been consumed. But Italy, though delivered from that oppressive fiction, remained a prey to successive floods of Barbarians. Already ravaged by Alaric and Attila, she had not enjoyed a breath-

ing-time under the momentary shelter of the genius of Theodoric.

In the East, two theological tyrants disputed the dishonoured throne of Constantinople. One of these, Basilicus, had found five hundred bishops to subscribe the anathema which he launched against the pope and the orthodox Council of Chalcedon: the other, Zeno, authorised heresy in his edicts;[1] he exhausted with his spoliations and debaucheries the nations whom he did not even attempt to defend against the Barbarians. Thus commenced a period of miserable and sanguinary disputes, which lasted, without intermission, for thirty-four years, until the advent of the predecessor of Justinian.[2]

In the other parts of Europe, the Barbarians founded states and kingdoms, some of which were destined to be not without distinction, but of which not one belonged even to the Catholic faith.

Germany was still entirely pagan, as was also Great Britain, where the new-born faith had been stifled by the Angles and Saxons. Gaul was invaded on the north by the pagan Franks, and on the south by the Arian Burgundians. Spain was overrun and ravaged by the Visigoths, the Sueves, the Alans, and the Vandals, all Arians. The same

[1] The *Henoticum*, or edict of union, published in 482, in opposition to the Council of Chalcedon, where the heresy of Eutychus, who held the divinity and humanity of our Lord to be the same nature, had been condemned.

[2] Justin I., in 518.

Vandals, under the successor of Genseric, made Christian Africa desolate, by a persecution more unpitying and refined in cruelty than those of the Roman emperors. In a word, all those countries into which the first disciples of Jesus Christ carried the faith, had fallen a prey to barbarism, and most frequently to a barbarism which the Arian heresy employed as the instrument of its hatred against the Church. The world had to be a second time reconquered.

Christian souls everywhere saw with terror the formidable prophecies of the ancient law against a false-hearted race realised anew. "Lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful. . . . Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every stronghold; for they shall heap dust, and take it."[1]

[1] Hab. i. 6-10. "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."—Joel i. 4.

Amidst this universal darkness and desolation, history directs our gaze towards those heights, in the centre of Italy, and at the gates of Rome, which detach themselves from the chain of the Apennines, and extend from the ancient country of the Sabines to that of the Samnites. A single solitary was about to form there a centre of spiritual virtue, and to light it up with a splendour destined to shine over regenerated Europe for ten centuries to come.[1]

Position of Subiaco.

Fifty miles to the west of Rome, among that group of hills where the Anio hollows the deep gorge which separates the country of the Sabines from that once inhabited by the Eques and Herniei, the traveller, ascending by the course of the river, comes to a kind of basin, which opens out between two immense walls of rock, and from which a fresh and transparent stream[2] descends from fall to fall, to a place named Subiaco. This grand and picturesque site had attracted the attention of Nero. He confined the water of the Anio by dams, and constructed artificial lakes and baths below, with a delicious villa, which took, from its position, the name of *Sublaqueum*, and of which some shapeless

[1] All that we know of the life of St Benedict has come to us from the most authentic source, Pope Gregory the Great. He has devoted book ii. of his *Dialogues* to the life of St Benedict, relating it as he received it from the lips of four disciples of the holy patriarch, Constantine, Honoratus, Valentinian, and Simplicius, the two first of whom had succeeded him as abbots at Monte Cassino and Subiaco.

[2] "Frigidas atque perspicuas emanat aquas."—S. GREGOR., *Dial.* lib. ii. c. 1.

ruins remain. He sometimes resided there. One day, in the midst of a feast, the cup which he raised to his lips was broken by thunder,[1] and this omen filled his miserable soul with unusual terror; Heaven had marked this place with the seal at once of its vengeance and of its mercies. Four centuries after Nero, and when solitude and silence had long replaced the imperial orgies,[2] a young patrician, flying from the delights and dangers of Rome, sought there a refuge and solitude with God. He had been baptised under the name of Benedictus, that is to say, Well said, or Blessed. He belonged to the illustrious house of Anicius, which had already given so many of its children to monastic life.[3] By his mother's side he was the last scion of the lords of Nursia, a Sabine town, where he was born, as has been said, in 480. He was scarcely fourteen when he resolved to renounce fortune, knowledge, his family, and the happiness of this world. Leaving his old nurse, who had been the first to love him, and who alone followed him still, he plunged into these wild gorges, and ascended those almost inaccessible hills.[4] On the

Benedict hides himself there in his youth.

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[1] TACIT, *Annal.*, lib. xiv. c. 22.

[2] NIBBY, *Topografia die Contorni di Roma;* JANUCCELLI, *Dissertaz. sopra l'Orig. di Subiaco*, 1851.

[3] See above, vol. i. page 391. Compare HÆFTEN., *Disquisit. Monastic.*, 1644, *Proleg.*, 14. Two centuries after his death, the immense ruins of his ancestral palace were still to be seen at the gates of Nursia.—ADREVALD., *De Mirac. S. Bened.*, i. 1. Nursia, which was also the country of Sertorius, is now called Norcia.

[4] "Despectis literarum studiis, . . . relictis domo rebusque paternis . . . despexit jam quasi aridum mundum cum flore. . . . Quæ hunc

way he met a monk, named Romanus,[1] who gave him a haircloth shirt and a monastic dress made of skins. Proceeding on his ascent, and reaching to the middle of the abrupt rock, which faces to the south, and which overhangs the rapid course of the Anio, he discovered a dark and narrow cave, a sort of den, into which the sun never shone. He there took up his abode, and remained unknown to all except to the monk Romanus, who fed him with the remainder of his own scanty fare,[2] but who, not being able to reach his cell, transmitted to him every day, at the end of a cord, a loaf and a little bell, the sound of which warned him of this sustenance which charity had provided for him.

He lived three entire years in this tomb. The shepherds who discovered him there, at first took him for a wild beast; but by his discourses, and the efforts he made to instil grace and piety into their rustic souls, they recognised in him a servant of God.[3] Temptations were not wanting to him. The allurements of voluptuousness acted so strongly on his excited senses, that he was on the point of leaving his retreat to seek after a woman whose beauty had

arctius amabat, sola secuta est. . . . Per abrupta montium, per concava vallium, per defossa terrarum."—S. GREGOR., *l. c.*

[1] The locality of the meeting is indicated by a chapel called *Santa Crocella*, which is still seen between the two monasteries of St Scholastica and *Sagro Speco*.

[2] BOSSUET, *Panégyrique de Saint Benoît.*

[3] "Quem dum vestitum pellibus inter fruteta cernerent, aliquam bestiam esse crediderunt, . . . ad pietatis gratiam a bestiali mente mutati sunt."—S. GREGOR., *l. c.*

formerly impressed him, and whose memory haunted him incessantly. But there was near his grotto a clump of thorns and briers: he took off the vestment of skins which was his only dress, and rolled himself among them naked, till his body was all one wound, but also till he had extinguished for ever the infernal fire which inflamed him even in the desert.[1]

St Francis at Subiaco.

Seven centuries later, another saint, father of the most numerous monastic family which the Church has produced after that of St Benedict, St Francis of Assisi, came to visit that wild site which was worthy to rival the bare Tuscan rock where the stigmata of the passion were imprinted on himself.[2] He prostrated himself before the thicket of thorns which had been a triumphal bed to the masculine virtue of the patriarch of the monks, and after having bathed with his tears the soil of that glorious battle-field, he planted there two rose-trees. The roses of St Francis grew, and have survived the

[1] "Quamdam aliquando fœminam aspexerat, quam malignus spiritus ante ejus mentis oculos reduxit: tantoque igne . . . animum in specie illius accendit, ut dum in ejus pectore amoris flamma vim caperet, etiam pene deserere eremum voluptate victus deliberaret. . . . Exutus indumento, nudum se in illis spinarum aculeis et urticarum incendiis projecit, ibique diu volutatus, totus ex eis vulneratus exiit. Ex quo tempore, sicut ipse postea perhibebat, ita in eo est tentatio voluptatis edomita, ut tale aliquid in se minime sentiret."—S. GREGOR., *l. c.*

[2] The *Alvernia*, near Chiusi, in the Casentin, where a celebrated monastery indicates the place where the patriarch of the order of minor brothers received the stigmata:—

"Nel crudo sasso intra Tevere ed Arno
Da Cristo prese l' ultimo sigillo
Che le sue membra du' anni portarno."

DANTE, *Paradiso*, c. xi.

St Francis came to Subiaco in 1223.

Benedictine briers. This garden, twice sanctified, still occupies a sort of triangular plateau, which projects upon the side of the rock a little before and beneath the grotto which sheltered St Benedict. The eye, confined on all sides by rocks, can survey freely only the azure of heaven. It is the last of those sacred places visited and venerated in the celebrated and unique monastery of the Sagro Speco, which forms a series of sanctuaries built one over the other, backed by the mountain which Benedict has immortalised. Such was the hard and savage cradle of the monastic order in the West. It was from this tomb, where the delicate son of the last patricians of Rome buried himself alive, that the definite form of monastic life—that is to say, the perfection of Christian life—was born. From this cavern and thicket of thorns have issued legions of saints and monks, whose devotion has won for the Church her greatest conquests and purest glories. From this fountain has gushed the inexhaustible current of religious zeal and fervour. Thence came, and shall still come, all whom the spirit of the great Benedict shall inspire with the impulse of opening new paths or restoring ancient discipline in cloistral life. The sacred site which the prophet Isaiah seems to have pointed out beforehand to cenobites, by words so marvellously close in their application—"Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit (CAVERNAM LACI) whence ye are digged"—is there recognised by all. We lament

for the Christian who has not seen this grotto, this desert, this nest of the eagle and the dove, or who, having seen it, has not prostrated himself with tender respect before the sanctuary from which issued, with the rule and institution of St Benedict, the flower of Christian civilisation, the permanent victory of the soul over the flesh, the intellectual enfranchisement of Europe, and all that charm and grandeur which the spirit of sacrifice, regulated by faith, adds to knowledge, labour, and virtue.[1]

The solitude of the young anchorite was not long respected. The faithful in the neighbourhood, who brought him food for the body, asked the bread of life in return. The monks of a neighbouring monastery, situated near Vico Varo (the *Vario* of Horace), obtained, by dint of importunity, his consent to become their ruler, but, soon disgusted by his austerity, they endeavoured to poison him. He made the sign of the cross over the vessel which contained the poison, and it broke as if it had been struck with a stone. He left these unworthy monks to re-enter joyfully his beloved cavern, and to live by himself alone.[2] But it was vain: he soon found himself surrounded by such a multitude of disciples, that, to give them a shelter, he was compelled to

[1] Petrarch, who visited Subiaco, says: "Illud immane et devotum specus, quod qui viderunt *vidisse* quodammodo *Paradisi limen* credunt." —*De Vitâ Solit.*, lib. ii. c. 9.

[2] "Cum ei cibum afferrent corporis, ab ejus ore in sua pectora alimenta referebant vitæ. . . . Vas pestiferi potus sic confractum est ac si pro signo lapidem dedisset. . . . Ad locum dilectæ solitudinis rediit, et solus in superni spectatoris oculis habitavit secum."—S. GREG., *l. c.*

found in the neighbourhood of his retreat twelve monasteries, each inhabited by twelve monks.[1] He kept some with him in order to direct them himself, and was thus finally raised to be the superior of a numerous community of cenobites.

Goths among the disciples of Benedict.

Clergy and laymen, Romans and Barbarians, victors and vanquished, alike flocked to him, attracted by the fame of his virtue and miracles. While the celebrated Theodoric, at the head of his Goths, up to that time invincible, destroyed the ephemeral kingdom of the Herules, seized Rome, and overspread Italy, other Goths came to seek faith, penitence, and monastic discipline under the laws of Benedict.[2] At his command they armed themselves with axes and hatchets, and employed their robust strength in rooting out the brushwood and clearing the soil, which, since the time of Nero, had again become a wilderness. The Italian painters

[1] See some valuable details of those twelve monasteries in the *Memorie Storiche della S. Grotti di S. Benedetto sopra Subiaco*, by D.Vinc. Bini, Abbot of the Sagro Speco, in 1840. Compare Yepes, *Coronica Geral de S. Benito*, ad. an. 510. As to the actual state of the monastery of the Sagro Speco, it is perfectly described in a work by the Abbot M. Barbier de Montault, published by the *Annales Archéologiques* of Didron, vols. xviii. and xix., 1859. The frescoes and inscriptions which make this sanctuary so precious a monument of Christian archæology, are there described with great exactness. These frescoes, several of which go as far back as the thirteenth century, have been reproduced with minute accuracy in a folio volume, entitled *Imagerie du Sagro Speco*, and published at Rome by an anonymous Belgian, printing-office of the R. C. A., 1855.

[2] It must be remarked, however, that Gothic monks had been seen in the neighbourhood of Constantinople from the fourth century, and that St John Chrysostom had some intercourse with them.—Bulteau, *Hist. Mon. d'Orient*, p. 463.

of the great ages of art have left us many representations of the legend told by St Gregory, in which St Benedict restores to a Goth who had become a convert at Subiaco, the tool which that zealous but unskilful workman had dropped to the bottom of the lake, and which the abbot miraculously brought forth. "Take thy tool," said Benedict to the Barbarian woodcutter—"take it, work, and be comforted." Symbolical words, in which we find an abridgment of the precepts and examples lavished by the monastic order on so many generations of conquering races: *Ecce labora!*[1]

The young patrician monks: Maur and Placidus.

Beside these Barbarians already occupied in restoring the cultivation of that Italian soil which their brethren in arms still wasted, were many children of the Roman nobility whom their fathers had confided to Benedict to be trained to the service of God. Among these young patricians are two whose names are celebrated in Benedictine annals: Maur, whom the abbot Benedict made his own coadjutor; and Placidus, whose father was lord of the manor of Subiaco,[2] which did not prevent

[1] "Gotthus quidam, pauper spiritu, ad conversionem venit, quem Dei vir Benedictus libentissime suscepit. . . . Ei dari ferramentum jussit, quod falcastrum vocatur, ut de loco quodam vepres abscinderet quatenus illic hortus fieri deberet . . . super ripam laci. . . . Cumque Gotthus idem densitatem veprium totius virtutis annisu succideret. . . . Ecce labora et noli contristari."—S. GREG., c. 6.

[2] The father of Placidus, who was a senator called Tertullus, overwhelmed St Benedict with territorial donations, and endowed, among others, according to tradition, that great monastery of San Severino, which is still to be seen at Naples, and where the beautiful series of frescoes by Zingaro, which represent the principal events in the life

his son from rendering menial services to the community, such as drawing water from the lake of Nero. The weight of his pitcher one day overbalanced him, and he fell into the lake. We shall leave Bossuet to tell the rest, in his panegyric, delivered twelve centuries afterwards, before the sons of the founder of Subiaco: "St Benedict ordered St Maur, his faithful disciple, to run quickly and draw the child out. At the word of his master, Maur went away without hesitation, . . . and, full of confidence in the order he had received, walked upon the water with as much security as upon the earth, and drew Placidus from the whirlpool which would have swallowed him up. To what shall I attribute so great a miracle, whether to the virtue of the obedience, or to that of the commandment? A doubtful question, says St Gregory, between St Benedict and St Maur. But let us say, to decide it, that the obedience had grace to accomplish the command, and that the command had grace to give efficacy to the obedience. Walk, my fathers, upon the waves with the help of obedience; you shall find solid support amid the inconstancy of human things.

of St Benedict, are admired. Since we have occasion here to remark these monuments of Christian art, which shed so bright and pure a light over the monuments of history, we may be permitted also to point out the admirable fresco of the church of San Severo, at Peruzzi, in which Raphael, in 1505, still a youth, has represented St Benedict seated in heaven, and contemplating our Lord, with his two disciples, St Placidus and St Maur, by his side; in front of him, St Romuald and two Benedictine martyrs. It has been perfectly engraved by M. Keller of Dusseldorf, the same to whom we owe the only engraving of the *Dispute du Saint Sacrement*, which is worthy of Raphael's masterpiece.

The wayes shall have no power to overthrow you, nor the depths to swallow you up; you shall remain immovable, as if all was firm under your feet, and issue forth victorious."[1]

Trials of Benedict.

However, Benedict had the ordinary fate of great men and saints. The great number of conversions worked by the example and fame of his austerity awakened a homicidal envy against him. A wicked priest of the neighbourhood attempted first to decry and then to poison him. Being unsuccessful in both, he endeavoured, at least, to injure him in the object of his most tender solicitude — in the souls of his young disciples. For that purpose he sent, even into the garden of the monastery where Benedict dwelt and where the monks laboured, seven wretched women, whose gestures, sports, and shameful nudity, were designed to tempt the young monks to certain fall. Who does not recognise in this incident the mixture of barbarian rudeness and frightful corruption which characterise ages of decay and transition? When Benedict, from the threshold of his cell, perceived these shameless creatures, he despaired of his work;[2] he acknowledged that the interest of his beloved children constrained him to disarm so cruel an enmity by

[1] *Panegyric of St Benedict.*

[2] "Vicinæ ecclesiæ presbyter Florentius nomine, hujus nostri subdiaconi Florentii avus. . . . Ita ut in horto cellæ . . . ante eorum oculos nudas septem puellas mitteret, quæ coram eis sibi invicem manus tendentes et diutius ludentes, illorum mentes ad perversitatem libidinis inflammarent. Quod vir sanctus de cella prospiciens . . ."—S. GREGOR., c. 8.

retreat. He appointed superiors to the twelve monasteries which he had founded, and, taking with him a small number of disciples, he left for ever the wild gorges of Subiaco, where he had lived for thirty-five years.

His departure for Monte Cassino. 529.

Without withdrawing from the mountainous region which extends along the western side of the Apennines, Benedict directed his steps towards the south along the Abruzzi, and penetrated into that Land of Labour, the name of which seems naturally suited to a soil destined to be the cradle of the most laborious men whom the world has known. He ended his journey in a scene very different from that of Subiaco, but of incomparable grandeur and majesty. There, upon the boundaries of Samnium and Campania, in the centre of a large basin, half-surrounded by abrupt and picturesque heights, rises a scarped and isolated hill, the vast and rounded summit of which overlooks the course of the Liris near its fountainhead, and the undulating plain which extends south towards the shores of the Mediterranean and the narrow valleys which, towards the north, the east, and the west, lost themselves in the lines of the mountainous horizon. This is Monte Cassino. At the foot of this rock, Benedict found an amphitheatre of the time of the Cæsars, amidst the ruins of the town of Cassinum, which the most learned and pious of Romans, Varro, that pagan Benedictine, whose memory and knowledge the sons of Benedict took pleasure in honouring,

had rendered illustrious.[1] From the summit the prospect extended on one side towards Arpinum, where the prince of Roman orators was born, and on the other towards Aquinum, already celebrated as the birthplace of Juvenal, before it was known as the country of the Doctor Angelico, which latter distinction should make the name of this little town known among all Christians.

It was amidst these noble recollections, this solemn nature, and upon that predestinated height, that the patriarch of the monks of the West founded the capital of the monastic order. He found paganism still surviving there. Two hundred years after Constantine, in the heart of Christendom, and so near Rome, there still existed a very ancient temple of Apollo and a sacred wood, where a multitude of peasants sacrificed to the gods and

[1] "Varro . . . sanctissimus et integerrimus."—CICERO, *Phil.*, ii. "Casinensis arcis sublimitas tanto olim culmine viguit, ut Romani celsitudo imperii philosophicis studiis illam in ævum dicaret. Hanc M. T. Varro omnium Romanorum doctissimus incoluit."—PETR. DIAC., *De Vir. Illust. Casin.*

"Nymphisque habitata rura Casini."

SIL. ITALIC., i. 12.

This town, restored by the monks, now bears the name of San Germano, in honour of a holy bishop of Capua, contemporary of Benedict. Between the town and the monastery, on a detached knoll of the mountain, still rises the vast castle of Rocca Janula, built in the middle ages, uninhabited, but not in ruins, with its towers and embattled ramparts, which were connected with the enclosures of San Germano by two long walls. Nothing could be more complete and striking than the general appearance of the holy mountain. At the foot, the modern town, with its Roman amphitheatre; half-way up, the feudal fortress; at the summit, the immortal monastery, always imposing and majestic, despite the alterations which its architecture has undergone.

demons.[1] Benedict preached the faith of Christ to these forgotten people; he persuaded them to cut down the wood, to overthrow the temple and the idol. Let us listen to Dante, who has translated, in his own fashion, the narrative of St Gregory, in that magnificent song of the *Paradise*, where the instructions of Beatrice are interrupted and completed by the apparition of the patriarch of the Western monks:—

"Quel monte, a cui Cassino e nella costa,
Fu frequentato già in su la cima,
Dalla gente ingannata e mal disposta;
Ed io son quel che su vi portai prima
Lo nome di colui che 'n terra adusse
La verità, che tanto ci sublima:
E tanta grazia sovra mi rilusse
Ch' io ritrassi le ville circonstanti
Dall' empio colto, che' l mondo sedusse."

Upon these remains Benedict built two oratories, one dedicated to St John the Baptist, the first solitary of the new faith; the other to St Martin, the great monk-bishop, whose ascetic and priestly virtues had edified Gaul, and reached as far as Italy. Round these chapels rose the monastery which was to become the most powerful and celebrated in the Catholic universe; celebrated especially because there Benedict wrote his rule, and at the same time formed the type which was to serve as a model to innumerable communities submitted to that sove-

The archmonastery of the Monte Cassino.

[1] "Vetustissimum fanum . . . in quo ex antiquorum more gentilium a stulto rusticorum populo Apollo colebatur circumquaque in cultu dæmoniorum luci succreverunt. . . . Infidelium insana multitudo."—S. GREGOR., c. 8.

reign code. It is for this reason that emulous pontiffs, princes, and nations have praised, endowed, and visited the sanctuary where monastic religion, according to the expression of Pope Urban II., "flowed from the heart of Benedict as from a fountainhead of Paradise;"[1] and which another Pope,[2] who himself issued out of Monte Cassino to ascend the apostolical chair, has not hesitated to compare to Sinai, in these lines of proud and bold simplicity which he engraved upon the altar of the holy patriarch—

> "Hæc domus est similis Sinaï sacra jura ferenti,
> Ut lex demonstrat hîc quæ fuit edita quondam.
> Lex hinc exivit, mentes quæ ducit ab imis,
> Et vulgata dedit lumen per climata sæcli."[3]

520-543. Benedict ended his life at Monte Cassino, where he lived for fourteen years, occupied, in the

[1] "Ipse omnium monachorum pater, et Casinense monasterium caput omnium perpetuo habeatur et merito, nam ex eodem loco de Benedicti pectore monastici ordinis religio quasi de Paradisi fonte emanavit."—*Bulla* URBANI II., *ad Calc. Chron. Casinen.*

[2] Didier, Abbot of Monte Cassino, successor to St Gregory VII., under the name of Victor III.

[3] LEO OSTIENSIS, *Chr. Casin.*, iii. 27.

I do not undertake here to describe the actual condition of Monte Cassino, nor to retrace its history. I would rather refer, for this description, to two correct and careful notices, one by M. Adolphe de Circourt, in vol. ix. of the *Revue des Deux Bourgognes*, 1839; and the other by M. Dantier, in vol. x. of the *Revue Contemporaine*, 1853. I shall confine myself to indicating here those parts of the immense and splendid abbey which tradition traces to the time of St Benedict. They are: 1st, the entrance gate, the very low arch of which indicates the yoke of humility under which the law obliged the monks to bend; on which is this inscription—"Fornicem saxis asperum ac depressum tantæ moli aditum angustum ne mireris, hospes. Angustum fecit patriarchæ sanctitas: venerare potius et sospes ingredere;" 2d, the lower portion of the square tower which surmounted this gate, and which is believed to have been

first place, with extirpating from the surrounding country the remnants of paganism, afterwards in building his monastery by the hands of his disciples, in cultivating the arid sides of his moun-

the residence of St Benedict and his first companions, as is inferred in the following inscriptions, placed in two distinct apartments, "Pars inferior turris, in qua S. P. N. Benedictus dum viveret habitabat;" and on one side, "Vetustissimum habitaculum in quo SSmi patriarchæ discipuli quiescebant." In a higher floor of the same turret, another inscription affirms that it was there the saint had the vision of the death of his sister and the Bishop of St Germain. Outside the monastery, the place consecrated by tradition is shown, where Benedict knelt in prayer before laying the first stone of his new dwelling, and that at which St Scholastica, his sister and auxiliary, rested, when climbing for the first time to the summit of the rock. With regard to the chief monastery, though it will be perpetually mentioned in the following narrative, it is necessary to refer the curious to the book which a learned and zealous monk of Monte Cassino, Dom Luigi Tosti, published on this subject, in three volumes, at Naples in 1842. We restrict ourselves to the following dates:—Destroyed for the first time by the Lombards in 583, the monastery was restored by the Abbot Petronax, under Gregory II., in 731, and consecrated by Pope Zacharias, in 748. Again destroyed by the Saracens, who massacred the greater part of the monks, in 857; it was rebuilt anew by the Abbot Aligern about 950, and consecrated by Alexander II., in 1071. After many other calamities, it was entirely rebuilt in 1649, and consecrated for the third time by Benedict XIII., in 1727. In the time of its splendour, the abbot was first baron of the kingdom of Naples, and administrator of a special diocese, established in 1321, and composed of 37 parishes. Among his dependencies were reckoned four bishoprics, two principalities, twenty counties, 250 castles, 440 towns or villages, 336 *curtes* or manors, 23 maritime ports, 33 islands, 200 mills, 300 territories, 1662 churches.—HÆFTEN., *Comment. in Vit. S. Bened.*, p. 105. At the end of the sixteenth century, his income was reckoned at the enormous sum of 500,000 ducats. But all this splendour gradually disappeared, first from the effect of the *commende*, of which the Abbey of Monte Cassino became the prey in the fifteenth century, afterwards by the wars and revolutions of Italy. Despoiled and ransomed a last time by the French under Championnet, transformed into a mere library by King Joseph Bonaparte in 1805, it has recovered, since the restoration of the Bourbons, a remnant of life and fortune, which is developing under the fertile atmosphere of the monastic revival which the nineteenth century has the glory of having originated.

tain,[1] and the devastated plains around, but above all, in extending to all who approached him the benefits of the law of God, practised with a fervour and charity which none have surpassed. Although he had never been invested with the priestly character, his life at Monte Cassino was rather that of a missionary and apostle than of a solitary. He was, notwithstanding, the vigilant head of a community which flourished and increased more and more. Accustomed to subdue himself in everything, and to struggle with the infernal spirits, whose temptations and appearances were not wanting to him more than to the ancient Fathers of the desert,[2] he had acquired the gift of reading souls, and discerning their most secret thoughts. He used this faculty not only to direct the young monks, who always gathered in such numbers round him, in their studies and the labours of agriculture and building which he shared with them; but even in the distant journeys on which they were sometimes sent, he followed them by a spiritual observation, discovered their least failings, reprimanded them on their return, and bound them in everything to a strict fulfilment of the rule which they had accepted. He exacted

[1] "Arida tu cujus hortis componis amœnis,
Nudaque fecundo palmite saxa tegis.
Mirantur scopula fruges, et non sua poma,
Pomiferisque viret silva domata comis."
Carmen de S. Bened., auct. MARCO, *discip.*

[2] S. GREG., *Dial.*, c. 9, 10, 11, &c.

from all the obedience, sincerity, and austerely regulated life of which he himself gave the first example.

Many young men of rich and noble families came here, as at Subiaco, to put themselves under his direction, or were confided to him by their parents. They laboured with the other brethren in the cultivation of the soil and the building of the monastery, and were bound to all the services imposed by the rule. Some of these young nobles rebelled in secret against that equality. Among these, according to the narrative of St Gregory, was the son of a *Defender*—that is to say, of the first magistrate of a town or province. One evening, it being his turn to light the abbot Benedict at supper, while he held the candlestick before the abbatial table, his pride rose within him, and he said to himself, "What is this man that I should thus stand before him while he eats, with a candle in my hand, like a slave? Am I then made to be his slave?"[1] Immediately Benedict, as if he had heard him, reproved him sharply for that movement of pride, gave the candle to another, and sent him back to his cell, dismayed to find himself at once discovered and restrained in his most secret thoughts. It was thus that the great legislator inaugurated in his new-formed cloister that alliance of aristocratic races with the Benedictine order of

[1] "Quis est hic cui ego manducanti assisto, lucernam teneo, servitutem impendo? Quis sum ego uti isti serviam?"—S. GREG., *Dial.*, c. 20.

which we shall have many generous and fruitful examples to quote.

He bound all—nobles and plebeians, young and old, rich and poor—under the same discipline. But he would have excess or violence in nothing: and when he was told of a solitary in the neighbouring mountains, who, not content with shutting himself up in a narrow cave, had attached to his foot a chain the other end of which was fixed in the rock, so that he could not move beyond the length of this chain, Benedict sent to tell him to break it, in these words, "If thou art truly a servant of God, confine thyself not with a chain of iron, but with the chain of Christ."[1]

Intercourse between Benedict and the neighbouring population.

And extending his solicitude and authority over the surrounding populations, he did not content himself with preaching eloquently to them the true faith,[2] but also healed the sick, the lepers, and the possessed, provided for all the necessities of the soul and body, paid the debts of honest men oppressed by their creditors, and distributed in incessant alms the provisions of corn, wine, and linen which were sent to him by the rich Christians of the neighbourhood. A great famine having afflicted Campania in 539, he distributed to the poor all the provisions of the monastery, so that one day there remained only five loaves to feed all the com-

[1] "Si servus Dei es, non te teneat catena ferrea, sed catena Christi."—S. GREG., *Dial.*, lib. iii. c. 16.

[2] "Doctrinæ quoque verbo non mediocriter fulsit."—*Ibid.*, lib. ii. c. 36.

munity. The monks were dismayed and melancholy: Benedict reproached them with their cowardice. "You have not enough to-day," he said to them, "but you shall have too much to-morrow." And accordingly they found next morning at the gates of the monastery two hundred bushels of flour, bestowed by some unknown hand. Thus were established the foundations of that traditional and unbounded munificence to which his spiritual descendants have remained unalterably faithful, and which was the law and glory of his existence.

So much sympathy for the poor naturally inspired them with a blind confidence in him. One day, when he had gone out with the brethren to labour in the fields, a peasant, distracted with grief, and bearing in his arms the body of his dead son, came to the monastery and demanded to see Father Benedict. When he was told that Benedict was in the fields with the brethren, he threw down his son's body before the door, and, in the transport of his grief, ran at full speed to seek the saint. He met him returning from his work, and from the moment he perceived him, began to cry, "Restore me my son!" Benedict stopped and asked, "Have I carried him away?" The peasant answered, "He is dead; come and raise him up." Benedict was grieved by these words, and said, "Go home, my friend, this is not a work for us; this belongs to the holy apostles. Why do you come to impose upon us so tremendous a burden?" But the father

persisted, and swore in his passionate distress that he would not go till the saint had raised up his son. The abbot asked him where his son was. "His body," said he, "is at the door of the monastery." Benedict, when he arrived there, fell on his knees, and then laid himself down, as Elijah did in the house of the widow of Sarepta, upon the body of the child, and, rising up, extended his hands to heaven, praying thus: "Lord, look not upon my sins, but on the faith of this man, and restore to the body the soul thou hast taken away from it." Scarcely was his prayer ended, when all present perceived that the whole body of the child trembled. Benedict took him by the hand, and restored him to his father full of life and health.[1]

He protects them against the Goths.

His virtue, his fame, the supernatural power which was more and more visible in his whole life, made him the natural protector of the poor husbandmen against the violence and rapine of the new masters of Italy. The great Theodoric had organised an energetic and protective government, but he dishonoured the end of his reign by persecution and cruelty; and since his death barbarism had regained all its ancient ascendancy among the Goths. The rural populations groaned under the yoke of these rude oppressors, doubly exasperated, as Barbarians and as Arians, against the Italian

[1] "Redde filium meum. . . . Numquid ego filium tuum abstuli? . . . Regrediente anima, ita corpusculum pueri omne contremuit, ut sub oculis omnium qui aderant apparuerit concussione mirifica tremendo palpitasse."—S. GREG., *Dial.*, lib. ii. 32.

Catholics. To Benedict, the Roman patrician who had become a serf of God, belonged the noble office of drawing towards each other the Italians and Barbarians, two races cruelly divided by religion, fortune, language, and manners, whose mutual hatred was embittered by so many catastrophes inflicted by the one and suffered by the other, since the time of Alaric. The founder of Monte Cassino stood between the victors and the vanquished like an all-powerful moderator and inflexible judge. The facts which we are about to relate, according to the narrative of St Gregory, would be told throughout all Italy, and, spreading from cottage to cottage, would bring unthought-of hope and consolation into the hearts of the oppressed, and establish the popularity of Benedict and his order on an immortal foundation in the memory of the people.

History of Galla.

It has been seen that there were already Goths among the monks at Subiaco, and how they were employed in reclaiming the soil which their fathers had laid waste. But there were others who, inflamed by heresy, professed a hatred of all that was orthodox and belonged to monastic life. One especially, named Galla, traversed the country panting with rage and cupidity, and made a sport of slaying the priests and monks who fell under his power, and spoiling and torturing the people to extort from them the little that they had remaining. An unfortunate peasant, exhausted by the torments

inflicted upon him by the pitiless Goth, conceived the idea of bringing them to an end by declaring that he had confided all that he had to the keeping of Benedict, a servant of God; upon which Galla stopped the torture of the peasant, but, binding his arms with ropes, and thrusting him in front of his own horse, ordered him to go before and show the way to the house of this Benedict who had defrauded him of his expected prey. Both pursued thus the way to Monte Cassino; the peasant on foot, with his hands tied behind his back, urged on by the blows and taunts of the Goth, who followed on horseback, an image only too faithful of the two races which unhappy Italy enclosed within her distracted bosom, and which were to be judged and reconciled by the unarmed majesty of monastic goodness. When they had reached the summit of the mountain they perceived the abbot seated alone, reading at the door of his monastery. "Behold," said the prisoner, turning to his tyrant, "there is the Father Benedict of whom I told thee." The Goth, believing that here, as elsewhere, he should be able to make his way by terror, immediately called out with a furious tone to the monk, "Rise up, rise up, and restore quickly what thou hast received from this peasant." At these words the man of God raised his eyes from his book, and, without speaking, slowly turned his gaze first upon the Barbarian on horseback, and then upon the husbandman bound, and bowed down by

his bonds. Under the light of that powerful gaze the cords which tied his poor arms loosed of themselves, and the innocent victim stood erect and free, while the ferocious Galla, falling on the ground, trembling, and beside himself, remained at the feet of Benedict, begging the saint to pray for him. Without interrupting his reading, Benedict called his brethren, and directed them to carry the fainting Barbarian into the monastery, and give him some blessed bread; and, when he had come to himself, the abbot represented to him the extravagance, injustice, and cruelty of his conduct, and exhorted him to change it for the future. The Goth was completely subdued, and no longer dared to ask anything of the labourer whom the mere glance of the monk had delivered from his bonds.[1]

Interview between Benedict and Totila. 542.

But this mysterious attraction, which drew the Goths under the influence of Benedict's looks and words, produced another celebrated and significant scene. The two principal elements of reviving society in their most striking impersonation—the victorious Barbarians and the invincible monks—

[1] "Avaritiæ suæ æstu succensus, in rapinam verum inhians . . . ejus brachia loris fortibus astringens, ante equum suum cœpit impellere. . . . quem, ligatis brachiis, rusticus antecedens duxit. . . . Eidem subsequenti et sævienti dixit: Ecce iste est de quo dixeram te, Benedictus pater. . . . Surge, surge, et res istius rustici redde quas accepisti. . . . Ad cujus brachia dum oculos deflexisset . . . cumque is qui ligatus veniret cœpisset subito astare solutus. . . . Tremefactus Galla ad terram corruit, et cervicem crudelitatis rigidæ ad ejus vestigia inclinans. . . . Qui fractus recedens."—S. GREG., *Dial.*, ii. 31. This miracle is represented on one of the capitals of the beautiful and curious church of St Benoît-sur-Loire, in the diocese of Orleans.

were here confronted. Totila, the greatest of the successors of Theodoric, ascended the throne in 542, and immediately undertook the restoration of the monarchy of the Ostrogoths, which the victories of Belisarius had half overthrown. Having defeated at Faenza, with only five thousand men, the numerous Byzantine army, led by the incapable commanders whom the jealousy of Justinian had substituted for Belisarius, the victorious king made a triumphal progress through Central Italy, and was on his way to Naples when he was seized with a desire to see this Benedict, whose fame was already as great among the Romans as among the Barbarians, and who was everywhere called a prophet. He directed his steps towards Monte Cassino, and caused his visit to be announced. Benedict answered that he would receive him. But Totila, desirous of proving the prophetic spirit which was attributed to the saint, dressed the captain of his guard in the royal robes and purple boots, which were the distinctive mark of royalty, gave him a numerous escort, commanded by the three counts who usually guarded his own person, and charged him, thus clothed and accompanied, to present himself to the abbot as the king.[1] The moment that Benedict perceived him, "My son," he cried, "put off the dress you wear; it is not yours."

[1] "Cui dum protinus mandatum de monasterio fuisset ut veniret. Spatharius. . . . Tres qui sibi præ cæteris adhærere consueverat. . . ."—S. GREG., lib. ii. c. 14. The spatharius was called Riggo, and the three counts, Vulteric, Ruderic, and Blindin.

The officer immediately threw himself upon the ground, appalled at the idea of having attempted to deceive such a man. Neither he nor any of the retinue ventured so much as to approach the abbot, but returned at full speed to the king, to tell him how promptly they had been discovered. Then Totila himself ascended the monastic mountain; but when he had reached the height, and saw from a distance the abbot seated, waiting for him, the victor of the Romans and the master of Italy was afraid. He dared not advance, but threw himself on his face before the servant of Christ. Benedict said to him three times, "Rise." But as he persisted in his prostration, the monk rose from his seat and raised him up. During the course of their interview, Benedict reproved him for all that was blamable in his life, and predicted what should happen to him in the future. "You have done much evil; you do it still every day; it is time that your iniquities should cease. You shall enter Rome; you shall cross the sea; you shall reign nine years, and the tenth you shall die." The king, deeply moved, commended himself to his prayers, and withdrew. But he carried away in his heart this salutary and retributive incident, and from that time his barbarian nature was transformed.[1]

1 "Quem cum a longe sedentem cerneret, non ausus accedere sese in terram dedit . . . : Surge, sed ipse ante eum de terra erigere se non auderet. . . . Jesu Christi famulus per semetipsum dignatus est accedere ad regem prostratum, quem de terra levavit. . . . Ex illo jam tempore,

Totila was as victorious as Benedict had predicted he should be. He possessed himself first of Benevento and Naples, then of Rome, then of Sicily, which he invaded with a fleet of five hundred ships, and ended by conquering Corsica and Sardinia. But he exhibited everywhere a clemency and gentleness which, to the historian of the Goths, seem out of character at once with his origin and his position as a foreign conqueror.[1] He treated the Neapolitans as his children, and the captive soldiers as his own troops, gaining himself immortal honour by the contrast between his conduct and the horrible massacre of the whole population, which the Greeks had perpetrated, ten years before, when that town was taken by Belisarius. He punished with death one of his bravest officers, who had insulted the daughter of an obscure Italian, and gave all his goods to the woman whom he had injured, and that despite the representations of the principal nobles of his own nation, whom he convinced of the necessity for so severe a measure, that they might merit the protection of God upon their arms. When Rome surrendered, after a prolonged siege, Totila forbade

minus crudelis fuit."—S. GREG., lib. ii. c. 14. There is in the church of the Benedictines of San Miniato, near Florence, a curious fresco by one of the most ancient painters of the great Florentine school, Spinello Aretino, which represents this historical scene in an impressive and primitive manner.

[1] "Benignitas quæ illique nec barbaro, nec hosti satis convenit . . . unde factum est ut ejus nomen ut sapientiæ, ita et benignitatis celebre apud Romanos jam esset."—PROCOP., *De Bell. Goth.*, i. 3. Compare the Count DU BUAT, *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Europe*, t. x. pp. 320, 329, 444.

the Goths to shed the blood of any Roman, and protected the women from insult. At the prayer of Belisarius he spared the city which he had begun to destroy, and even employed himself, at a later period, in rebuilding and repeopling it. At length, after a ten years' reign, he fell, according 552.
to the prediction of Benedict, in a great battle which he fought with the Greco-Roman army, commanded by the eunuch Narses. The glory and power of the Goths fell with him and his successor Teïas, who died in a similar manner the following year, fighting with heroic courage against the soldiers of Justinian. But it did not consist with the designs of God to let Italy fall a second time under the enervating yoke of the Byzantine Cæsars. The rule of the Barbarians, although hard and bloody, was more for her welfare. Venice and Florence, Pisa and Genoa, and many other immortal centres of valour and life, could issue from that sway, whilst the incorporation of Italy with the Lower Empire would have condemned her to the incurable degradation of the Christian East.

The Ostrogoths had scarcely disappeared when The Lombards.
the Lombards, imprudently called in by Narses himself, came at once to replace, to punish, and to make them regretted, by aggravating the fate of the Peninsula.

Placed as if midway between the two invasions of the Goths and Lombards, the dear and holy foundation of Benedict, respected by the one, was to yield

for a time to the rage of the other. The holy patriarch had a presentiment that his successors would not meet a second Totila to listen to them and spare them. A noble whom he had converted, and who lived on familiar terms with him, found him one day weeping bitterly. He watched Benedict for a long time; and then, perceiving that his tears were not stayed, and that they proceeded not from the ordinary fervour of his prayers, but from profound melancholy, he asked the cause. The saint answered, "This monastery which I have built, and all that I have prepared for my brethren, has been delivered up to the pagans by a sentence of Almighty God. Scarcely have I been able to obtain mercy for their lives!" Less than forty years after, this prediction was accomplished by the destruction of Monte Cassino by the Lombards.

St Scholastica.

Benedict, however, was near the end of his career. His interview with Totila took place in 542, in the year which preceded his death; and from the earliest days of the following year, God prepared him for his last struggle, by requiring from him the sacrifice of the most tender affection he had retained on earth. In the history of most saints who have exercised a reformatory and lasting influence upon monastic institutions, the name and influence of some holy woman is almost invariably found associated with their work and devotedness. These bold combatants in the war of the Spirit against the flesh seemed to have drawn strength and con-

solation from a chaste and fervent community of sacrifices, prayers, and virtues, with a mother or sister by blood or choice, whose sanctity shed upon one corner of their glorious life a ray of sweeter and more familiar light. To instance only the greatest: Macrine is seen at the side of St Basil, and the names of Monica and Augustine are inseparable; as in later ages are those of St Francis of Assisi and St Clara, St Francis de Sales and St Jeanne de Chantal.

St Benedict had also a sister, born on the same day with himself, named Scholastica: they loved each other as twins often love, with fraternal regard, elevated into a passion. But both loved God above all. Still earlier than her brother, Scholastica had consecrated herself to God from her infancy; and in becoming a nun,[1] she made herself the patroness and model of the innumerable family of virgins who were to acknowledge, adopt, and follow the code of her brother. She rejoined him at Monte Cassino, and established herself in a monastery, in the depths

[1] This act is not inconsistent with the decrees made by the Pope St Leo and the Emperor Majorian, who interdicted women from taking the veil before they had reached the age of forty. In those decrees, the solemn benediction, which is equivalent to what we now call the solemn or perpetual vows, is alone referred to.—See THOMASSIN, *Vetus ac Nova Disciplina*, pars i. lib. iii. c. 58. There were then, and had long been, several kinds of nuns. Some lived in isolated cells, as recluses; others remained, binding themselves to certain observances, in the bosom of their family; and others lived in a nunnery under a superior, and with a fixed rule. Mabillon has proved, against the Bollandistes, that Scholastica ought to be ranked among the latter. He has entitled her *Virginum Benedictinarum Ducem, Magistram, et Antesignanam.*

of a valley near the holy mountain.[1] Benedict directed her from afar, as he did many other nuns in the neighbourhood.[2] But they met only once a year; and then it was Scholastica who left her cloister and sought her brother. He, on his side, went to meet her: they met upon the side of the mountain, not far from the door of the monastery, in a spot which has been long venerated.

There, at their last meeting, occurred that struggle of fraternal love with the austerity of the rule, which is the only known episode in the life of Scholastica, and which has insured an imperishable remembrance to her name. They had passed the entire day in pious conversation, mingled with praises ot God. Towards the evening they ate together. While they were still at table, and the night approached, Scholastica said to her brother, "I pray thee do not leave me to-night, but let us speak of the joys of heaven till the morning." "What sayest thou, my sister?" answered Benedict; "on no account can I remain out of the monastery." Upon the refusal of her brother, Scholastica bent her head between her clasped hands on the table, and prayed to God, shedding torrents of tears to such an extent that the table was flooded with them. The weather was very serene: there was not a cloud in the air. But scarcely had she raised her head, when thunder

[1] It is supposed that this monastery was that of *Plumbariola*, rebuilt afterwards for the wife and daughter of a king of the Lombards, who became a monk of Monte Cassino.

[2] S. GREG., *Dial.*, ii. c. 12, 23, 33.

was heard, and a violent storm began; the rain, lightning, and thunder were such, that neither Benedict nor any of the brethren who accompanied him could take a step beyond the roof that sheltered them. Then he said to Scholastica, "May God pardon thee, my sister, but what hast thou done?" "Ah, yes," she answered him, "I prayed thee, and thou wouldst not listen to me; then I prayed God, and he heard me. Go now, if thou canst, and send me away, to return to thy monastery."[1] He resigned himself against his will to remain, and they passed the rest of the night in spiritual conversation. St Gregory, who has preserved this tale to us, adds that it is not to be wondered at God granted the desire of the sister rather than that of the brother, because of the two it was the sister who loved most, and that those who love most have the greatest power with God.[2]

Death of Scholastica. 10th February 543.

In the morning they parted to see each other no more in this life. Three days after, Benedict, being at the window of his cell, had a vision, in which he saw his sister entering heaven under the form of a dove. Overpowered with joy, his gratitude burst forth in songs and hymns to the glory of God. He immediately sent for the body of the saint, which

[1] "Insertis digitis manus super mensam posuit. . . . Caput in manibus declinans lacrymarum fluvium in mensam fuderat. . . . Parcat tibi omnipotens Deus, soror! quid est quod fecisti? . . . Ecce te rogavi et audire me noluisti. . . . Modo ergo, si potes, egredere, et, me dimissa, ad monasterium recede."—S. GREG., *Dial.*, ii. 33.

[2] "Justo valde judicio illa plus potuit quæ amplius amavit."—S. GREG.

was brought to Monte Cassino, and placed in the sepulchre which he had already prepared for himself, that death might not separate those whose souls had always been united in God.

The death of his sister was the signal of departure for himself. He survived her only forty days. He announced his death to several of his monks, then far from Monte Cassino. A violent fever having seized him, he caused himself, on the sixth day of his sickness, to be carried into the chapel consecrated to John the Baptist: he had before ordered the tomb in which his sister already slept to be opened. There, supported in the arms of his disciples, he received the holy viaticum; then placing himself at the side of the open grave, but at the foot of the altar, and with his arms extended towards heaven, he died standing, murmuring a last prayer.[1]

Death of Benedict. — 21st March 543.

Died standing!—such a victorious death became well that great soldier of God.

He was buried by the side of Scholastica, in a sepulchre made on the spot where stood the altar of Apollo which he had thrown down.[2] On that day two monks, one of whom was in the monastery

[1] "Erectis in cœlum manibus stetit, et ultimum spiritum inter verba orationis efflavit."—S. GREG.

[2] Their tomb is still seen under the high altar of the present church of Monte Cassino. The inscription: "Benedictum et Scholasticam, uno in terris partu editos, una in Deum pietate cœlo redditos, unus hic excipit tumulus, mortalis depositi pro æternitate custos." I owe the reproduction of all those little-known inscriptions to the benevolent and scrupulous exactness of Mgr. La Croix, ecclesiastical representative of France at Rome.

and the other on a journey, had the same vision. They saw a multitude of stars form into a shining pathway, which extended towards the east, from Monte Cassino up to heaven, and heard a voice which said to them, that by this road Benedict, the well-beloved of God, had ascended to heaven.[1]

II.—HIS RULE.

Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator: ibunt de virtute in virtutem.—*Ps.* lxxxiii. 6, 7.

Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi
Onde l'orto cattolico si riga
Sì che i suoi arbuscelli stan più vivi.
Paradiso, c. xii.

Rule of St Benedict.

Such was the life of the great man whom God destined to be the legislator of the monks of the West. It remains to us to characterise his legislation, that is to say, the rule which he has written, and which has been the undying code of the most august and fertile branch of the ecclesiastical army.

The first made for the West.

We must first observe that this rule is the first which had been written in the West and for the West. Up to that time, the monks of this half of the Roman world had lived under the authority of rules imported from the East, like that of St Basil, or of traditions borrowed from the monks of Egypt or Syria, like those of which Cassianus

[1] S. Greg., ii. 37.

had given so complete a collection. St Benedict did not assume either to overthrow or replace the authority of these monuments, which, on the contrary, he recalled and recommended in his own rule.[1] But the sad experience of his beginning, of all that he had seen and suffered in his youth as anchorite, cenobite, and superior, had convinced him of the insufficiency of the laws by which the Religious of his own time and country were governed. He perceived that it was necessary, for the suppression of the laxness which appeared everywhere, to substitute a permanent and uniform rule of government, for the arbitrary and variable choice of models furnished by the lives of the Fathers of the Desert, and to add to the somewhat confused and vague precepts of Pacome and Basil a selection of precise and methodical rules derived as much from the lessons of the past, as from his own personal experience. His illustrious biographer instructs us to see in his rule an exact reproduction of his own life in the cloister.[2]

He undertook, then, to reform the abuses and infirmities of the order which he had embraced, by a series of moral, social, liturgical, and penal ordinances, the entire collection of which constitutes that *Rule* which, in immortalising his name and work, has given to the monastic institute in the West its definitive and universal form.[3]

[1] C. 73. [2] S. Greg., ii. 36.

[3] We should remind our readers here that the Church recognised four

Let us listen to his own exposition, in his preamble, of the spirit and aim of his reform, given in a style peculiar to himself, the somewhat confused simplicity of which differs as much from the flowing language of St Augustine and St Gregory as from the correct elegance of Cicero or Cæsar :—

"Listen, oh son![1] to the precepts of the Master, and incline to him the ear of thy heart; do not fear to receive the counsel of a good father and to fulfil it fully, that thy laborious obedience may lead thee back to Him from whom disobedience

The fundamental idea of the Rule expounded in the preamble.

principal rules, under which might be classed almost all the religious orders: 1st, That of St Basil, which prevailed by degrees over all the others in the East, and which is retained by all the Oriental monks: 2d, That of St Augustine, adopted by the regular canons, the order of Premontré, the order of the Preaching brothers or Dominicans, and several military orders: 3d, That of St Benedict, which, adopted successively by all the monks of the West, still remained the common rule of the monastic order, properly so called, up to the thirteenth century; the orders of the Camaldules, of Vallombrosa, of the Carthusians, and of Citeaux, recognise this rule as the basis of their special constitutions, although the name of monk of St Benedict or Benedictine monk may still be specially assigned to others: 4th and last, The rule of St Francis, which signalised the advent of the Mendicant Orders at the thirteenth century. We shall further remark, that the denomination of *monks* is not generally attributed to the Religious who follow the rule of St Augustin, nor to the mendicant orders.

The rule of St Benedict has been published very often with and without commentaries. The most esteemed of the commentaries is that of Dom Martène, Paris, 1690, in 4to. That of Dom Calmet, Paris, 1734, 2 vols., may also be consulted with advantage.

The most recent and most correct edition of the Rule we know is that which has been given by Dom Charles Brandes, Benedictine of Einsiedeln, with a commentary and the history of the life of the patriarch, in three volumes. Einsiedeln and New York, 1857.

It is necessary to note, for Christian iconography, these first words *Ausculta, o fili!* which painters of the middle ages are accustomed to reproduce on the book which they put in the hands of St Benedict.

and weakness have alienated thee. To thee, whoever thou art, who renouncest thine own will to fight under the true King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and takest in hand the valiant and glorious weapons of obedience, are my words at this moment addressed.

"And in the first place, in all the good thou undertakest, ask of him, in earnest prayer, that he would bring it to a good end; that having condescended to reckon us among his children, he may never be grieved by our evil actions. Obey him always, by the help of his grace, in such a way that the irritated Father may not one day disinherit his children, and that also the terrible Master, enraged by our perverse deeds, may not give up his guilty servants to unending punishment because they would not follow him into glory.

"Then, let us rise up in answer to that exhortation of Scripture which says to us, 'It is time for us to awake out of sleep.' And with eyes open to the light of God and attentive ears, let us listen to the daily cry of the Divine voice: 'Come, my son, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Work while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.'

"Now, the Lord, who seeks his servant in the midst of the people, still says to him, 'What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days, that he may see good?' When if, at that word, thou

answerest, 'It is I,' the Lord will say to thee, 'If thou wouldest have life, keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it.' And that being done, 'Then shall my eyes be upon you, and my ears shall be open to your cry. And, even before thou callest me, I shall say to thee, Here am I!'

"What can be more sweet, O beloved brethren, than the voice of the Lord urging us thus? By this means the Lord, in his paternal love, shows us the way of life. Let us then gird our loins with faith and good works; and with our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel, let us follow upon his footsteps, that we may be worthy of seeing him who has called us to his kingdom. If we would find a place in the tabernacle of that kingdom, we must seek it by good works, without which none can enter there.

"For let us inquire at the Lord with the prophet . . . then listen to the answer He gives: . . . He who shall rest in the holy mountain of God is he who, being tempted by the devil, casts him and his counsel far from his heart, sets him at defiance, and, seizing the first off-shoots of sin, like new-born children, breaks them to pieces at the feet of Christ. It shall be those who, faithful in the fear of the Lord, shall not exalt themselves because of their services, but who, remembering that they can do nothing of themselves, and

that all the good that is in them is wrought by God, glorify the Lord and his works. . . .

"The Lord waits continually to see us answer by our actions to his holy precepts. It is for the amendment of our sins that the days of our life are prolonged like a dream, since the Apostle says: 'Art thou ignorant that the patience of God leads thee to repentance?' And it is in his mercy that the Lord himself says: 'I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn to me and live.'

"Having thus, my brethren, asked of the Lord who shall dwell in his tabernacle, we have heard the precepts prescribed to such a one. If we fulfil these conditions, we shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Let us then prepare our hearts and bodies to fight under a holy obedience to these precepts; and if it is not always possible for nature to obey, let us ask the Lord that he would deign to give us the succour of his grace. Would we avoid the pains of hell and attain eternal life while there is still time, while we are still in this mortal body, and while the light of this life is bestowed upon us for that purpose; let us run and strive so as to reap an eternal reward.

"We must, then, form a school of divine servitude, in which, we trust, nothing too heavy or rigorous will be established. But if, in conformity with right and justice, we should exercise a little severity for the amendment of vices or the preserva-

tion of charity, beware of fleeing under the impulse of terror from the way of salvation, which cannot but have a hard beginning. When a man has walked for some time in obedience and faith, his heart will expand, and he will run with the unspeakable sweetness of love in the way of God's commandments. May he grant that, never straying from the instruction of the Master, and persevering in his doctrine in the monastery until death, we may share by patience in the sufferings of Christ, and be worthy to share together his kingdom."[1]

The two governing principles:

In this programme the saint insists on two principles: action or labour, and obedience. These are indeed the two fundamental bases of his work; they serve as a clue to conduct us through the seventy-two articles of the rule which we shall now attempt to describe.

Labour,

Benedict would not have his monks limit themselves to spiritual labour, to the action of the soul upon itself: he made external labour, manual or literary, a strict obligation of his rule. Doubtless

[1] "Ad te ergo nunc meus sermo dirigitur . . . quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus Domino Christo vere regi militaturus, obedientiæ fortissima atque præclara arma assumis. . . . Exsurgamus ergo tandem aliquando. . . . Quærens Dominus . . . operarium suum. . . . Quid dulcius nobis hac voce Domini invitantis nos? . . . Qui malignum diabolum . . . deduxit ad nihilum, et parvulos cogitatus ejus tenuit et illisit ad Christum. . . . Ergo præparanda sunt corda et corpora nostra . . . militatura. . . . Constituenda est ergo a nobis Dominici scholæ servitii. . . . Processu vero conversationis et fidei, dilatato corde, inenarrabili dilectionis dulcedine, curritur via mandatorum Dei."—*Prologus Regulæ.*

the primitive cenobites had preached and practised the necessity of labour, but none had yet ordained and regulated it with so much severity and attentive solicitude. In order to banish indolence, which he called the enemy of the soul,[1] he regulated minutely the employment of every hour of the day according to the seasons, and ordained that, after having celebrated the praises of God seven times a-day, seven hours a-day should be given to manual labour, and two hours to reading. He imposed severe corrections on the brother who lost in sleep and talking the hours intended for reading. "If," said he, "the poverty of the place compels them to gather their harvest themselves, let not that grieve them, for they will be truly monks if they live by the labour of their hands, like our fathers and the apostles. But let all be done with moderation because of the weak."[2] Those who are skilled in the practice of an art or trade, could only exercise it by the permission of the abbot, in all humility; and if any one prided himself on his talent, or the profit which resulted from it to the house,[3] he was to have his occupation changed until he had humbled himself. Those who were charged with selling the product of the work of these select labourers, could take nothing from the price to the detriment of the monastery, nor especially could

[1] "Otiositas inimica est animæ."—*Reg.*, c. 48.

[2] "Omnia autem mensurate fiant propter pusillanimes."—*Ibid.*

[3] "Artifices si sunt in monasterio. . . . Si aliquis ex eis extollitur pro scientia artis suæ."—*Ibid.*, c. 57.

they raise it avariciously; they were to sell at less cost than the secular workmen, to give the greater glory to God. Labour was thus regulated in the monastery as in an industrial penitentiary, and the sons of the Roman patricians or the Barbarian nobles found themselves subjected, in crossing its threshold, to a severe equality, which bound even the labourer more skilful than ordinary monks, and reduced him to the humble level of an ordinary workman.

And obedience.

Obedience is also to his eyes a work, *obedientiæ laborem*,[1] the most meritorious and essential of all. A monk entered into monastic life only to make the sacrifice of self. This sacrifice implied especially that of the will. By a supreme effort of that will, still free and master of itself, it freely abdicated its power for the salvation of the sick soul, "in order that this soul, raising itself above its desires and passions, might establish itself fully upon God."[2] In giving up even the legitimate use of his own will, the monk, obeying a superior whom he had spontaneously chosen, and who was to him the representative of God himself, found an assured defence against covetousness and self-love. He entered like a victor into the liberty of the children of God. But this sacrifice, to be efficacious, had to be complete. Thus the rule pursued pride into its most secret hiding-place. Submission had to be prompt, perfect, and absolute. The monk

[1] *Prologus Reg.* [2] BOSSUET.

must obey always, without reserve, and without murmur, even in those things which seemed impossible and above his strength, trusting in the succour of God, if a humble and seasonable remonstrance, the only thing permitted to him, was not accepted by his superiors; to obey not only his superiors, but also the wishes and requests of his brethren.[1] Obedience became the more acceptable to God and easy to man, when it was practised calmly, promptly, and with good will.[2] It became then the first degree of humility. "Our life in this world," said the holy abbot, "is like the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream: in order to reach heaven, it must be planted by the Lord in a humbled heart: we can only mount it by distinct steps of humility and discipline."[3]

What can we do but lament over those who, in this generous abnegation of self, have seen only something borrowed from the worship of imperial majesty in degenerate Rome, and a fatal present made to Europe to weaken its own virtues?[4] No,

[1] Cap. 68 et 71. "Si cui fratri aliqua forte gravia aut impossibilia injunguntur . . . si omnino virium suarum mensuram viderit pondus excedere, impossibilitatis suæ causas . . . patienter et opportune suggerat, non superbiendo. . . . Quod si . . . prioris imperium perduraverit . . . sciat junior ita se expedire, et, ex caritate confidens de adjutorio Dei, obediat."

[2] "Non trepide, non tarde, non tepide."—C. 5.

[3] "Scala vero ipsa erecta, nostra est vita in sæculo: quæ humiliato corde a Domino erigitur ad cœlum. Latera enim hujus scalæ dicimus nostrum esse corpus et animam: in quibus lateribus diversos gradus humilitatis vel disciplinæ vocatio divina ascendendos inseruit."—C. 7.

[4] M. Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, 14th leç. As the antidote of this passage has been omitted by this great historian, generally better

this is neither a production of social decay, nor a sign of spiritual servitude. It is, on the contrary, the triumph of that moral and spiritual liberty of which imperial Rome had lost all conception, which Christianity alone could restore to the world, and the reign of which, specially extended and secured by the children of St Benedict, saved Europe from the anarchy, slavery, and decrepitude into which it had been thrown by the Roman empire.

Obedience tempered by the nature and origin of authority.

Doubtless this passive and absolute obedience would, in temporal affairs, and under chiefs appointed from without, and governing according to their interests or passions, become intolerable slavery. But besides the fact that among the Benedictines it was to be, always and with all, the result of a free determination, it was also sanctified and tempered by the nature and origin of the power. The abbot holds the place of Christ: he can ordain nothing that is not in conformity with the law of God. His charge is that of the father of a family, and of the good pastor: his life should be the mirror of his lessons. Charged with the important mission of governing souls, he owes to God the severest reckoning, and almost at every page of the rule is enjoined never to lose sight of that terrible responsibility. He has not only to rule them, but to heal them; not only to guide them, but to sup-

inspired, the *Panégyrique de St Benoît*, by Bossuet, which is at the same time the eloquent and profound eulogy of the voluntary obedience of the Christian, should be read for this purpose.

port them, and to make himself the servant of all whom he governs, obeying all, while each obeys him. He must accommodate himself to the most diverse humours and characters, but at the same time admit no respect of persons between the nobles and plebeians, the freemen and the slaves, the rich and the poor, who are under his authority.[1]

The chapter.

The exercise of this absolute authority is limited, besides, by the necessity of consulting all the monks assembled in a council or chapter upon all important business. The abbot has to state the subject, and to ask the advice of each, reserving to himself the right of making the final decision; but the youngest must be consulted like the others, because God often reveals to them the best course to follow. For lesser matters, the advice of the principal members of the monastery is sufficient, but the abbot can never act without advice.[2] His permanent council is composed of deans or elders,[3]

[1] "Difficilem et arduam rem. . . . Regere animas et multorum servire moribus . . . se omnibus conformet et aptet. . . . Semper cogitet, quia animas suscepit regendas, de quibus et rationem redditurus est."—*Reg.*, c. 2. Compare c. 3. "Nec quasi libera utens potestate injuste disponat aliquid: sed cogitet semper quia de omnibus judiciis et operibus suis redditurus est Deo rationem."—C. 62. "Sciatque sibi oportere prodesse magis quam præesse."—C. 64. "Non præferatur ingenuus ex servitio convertenti, nisi alia rationabilis causa existat, . . . quia, sive servus, sive liber, omnes in Christo unum sumus, et sub uno Domino æqualem servitutis militiam bajulamus."—*Reg.*, c. 2.

[2] "Convocet abbas omnem congregationem . . . et audiens consilium fratrum, tractet apud se, et quod utilius judicaverit faciat. . . . Omnes ad consilium vocari diximus, quia sæpe juniori Dominus revelat quod melius est. . . . Non præsumant defendere procaciter quod eis visum fuerit."—*Ibid.*, c. 3.

[3] Decani, Compare *Reg.*, c. 3 and 21. HÆFTEN., *Disquis.*, pp. 325, 332.

chosen by the monks themselves, not by order of seniority, but for their merit, charged with assisting the abbot, by sharing with him the weight of government. He can also, by the advice of these brethren, name a prior or provost, to be his lieutenant.[1] Finally, the abbot himself is elected by all the monks of the monastery: they may choose the last new-comer amongst them to be their chief; and once elected, his authority ceases only with his life.[2] But in case of the election of an evidently unworthy person, the bishop of the diocese, or the neighbouring abbots, or even the Christians of the environs, are entreated to prevent such a scandal.[3]

Elections of the abbot.

This absolute authority of the abbot, fixed in a rule which he is neither permitted to modify or transgress, was then limited at once by the unchanging constitution of the community, by the necessity of consulting either an elect number or the whole body of his subordinates upon all business, and finally by the election from which it proceeded; and this election, made by a limited number of electors, all essentially competent, and personally interested in their work, made the chief in reality the servant of all those whom he commanded.

[1] *Reg.*, c. 65.

[2] "Etiam si ultimus fuerit in ordine congregationis."—*Ibid.*, c. 64.

[3] At that time a majority was not requisite: the choice of the minority, if better, might carry the day: "Sive etiam pars, quamvis parva, congregationis, saniori consilio elegerit," c. 64. Subsequently, an absolute majority of voters was universally required to render valid the election of an abbot.

Its analogy with the feudal system.

It must be acknowledged that the spirit of community or association was never more strongly organised. There is, in this combination of authority, at once absolute, permanent, and elective, with the necessity of taking the advice of the whole community and of acting solely in its interests, a new principle, to which nothing in the pagan world nor in the Lower Empire was analogous—a principle which demonstrated its energetic fertility by the experience of ages. The community drew an irresistible force from the union of these wills purified by abnegation, and concentrated towards one sole end under a single hand, which was ruled and controlled in its turn by the spirit of sacrifice. Between the profligacy of the Empire and the anarchy of conquest, the Benedictine cloister, that living image of Christianity, presented to the decaying world a system which retained at once the vigorous discipline of the Roman legions and that spirit of self-devotion and domestic unity remarked by Tacitus in the German guilds.

It has been said with truth, that there exists in this rule an evangelical foundation and a feudal form.[1] The institutions which it founded, like the words and images which it employed, bore a certain warlike stamp. It seemed to extend a hand to the feudal system, which originated in the camps of the victorious Barbarians. Of these two forces, the one organised and consolidated material conquest, the

[1] Dom Pitra, *Hist. de St Léger*, p. 58.

other created a hierarchy and army for the conquest of souls.

Organisation of the community.

"The monastery, like a citadel always besieged, was to have within its enclosure gardens, a mill, a bakery, and various workshops, in order that no necessity of material life should occasion the monks to leave its walls.[1] A certain number of Religious, whom the abbot judged worthy, might be raised to the priesthood, for the spiritual service of the house, without ceasing, on that account, to be subject to ordinary discipline.[2]

One monk, chosen from among the most worthy, under the title of cellarer, was specially charged with the administration of the goods of the monastery, the distribution of food, the care of the furniture, of the hospital, and, in a word, with all the details of material life.[3] Finally, the most generous and delicate hospitality was enjoined towards the poor and all the strangers who should visit the monastery; this was to be exercised by the direct care of the abbot,[4] but without disturbing the solitude of the monks, or the silence of their cloisters. Let every stranger be received, says the rule, as if he

[1] *Reg.*, c. 66.

[2] *Ibid.* c. 62. It has been already shown (vol. i. p. 106) that, in the first centuries of its existence, the monastic order was not regarded as part of the clergy. Not only were the monks not all priests, but they were reckoned among laymen. It is very difficult to follow and recognise the different phases of the transformation which elevated the monks from the lay condition to that which procured them the title and standing of the *Regular Clergy*, in opposition to the *Secular Clergy*.

[3] *Ibid.*, c. 31. [4] *Ibid.*, c. 53.

were Christ himself; for it is Christ himself who shall one day say to us, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in."[1]

The community thus founded and governed was supported besides by two conditions indispensable to its security and duration: the reciprocal tie of all its members by the solemn engagement of the *vow*, and the formation of collective property by the sacrifice of all that was individual. The renunciation of personal will naturally led to that of individual property. Everything in the monastery was to be in common; the fortune like the labour, and interests like duties. The rule, therefore, denounced the idea of personal property as a vice which it was most essential to root out of the community. It was necessary, then, in becoming a monk, that a man should solemnly and for ever relinquish all his possessions, either to his own family, or to the poor, or to the monastery itself; reserving nothing to himself, possessing nothing of his own, absolutely nothing, not even tablets or a pen for writing, but receiving everything from the abbot, and that only for present use.[2]

Abdication of individual property.

An institution in which celibacy was implicitly the fundamental basis, alone could bear a discipline so contrary to human nature. But even where a man, by giving up marriage, made himself free of

[1] *Reg.*, c. 55.

[2] "Præcipue hoc vitium amputetur de monasterio: neque codicem, neque tabulas, neque graphium, sed nihil omnino."—*Ibid.*, c. 33. Compare c. 58.

all cares for his livelihood, he might still remain, in his own person, the object of the enfeebling tenderness of parents and friends. Benedict knew too well the habits of the nobility, to which he himself and his principal disciples belonged, not to redouble his precautions against the attempts made by parents to form a certain reserve or individual patrimony for the advantage of the child whom they gave to God by placing him in a monastery. By a special chapter of the rule, made out with the legal precision of a contemporary of Tribonius, every nobleman who destined his son for monastic life was required to swear that his child should receive nothing whatever of the paternal fortune, neither directly nor through a third party. The parents could only bestow on the monastery itself a donation which represented the fortune of their child, reserving the interest during their life if it so pleased them.[1]

Novitiate.

Even in the forms established by the new code to regulate the admission, try the vocation, and bind the consciences of these men who came to sacrifice their will and patrimony to God, everything shows the genius of organisation possessed by Benedict. There were two classes of candidates

[1] "Promittant sub jurejurando quia nunquam per se, nunquam per suffectam personam, nec quolibet modo ei aliquando aliquid dent aut tribuant occasionem habendi. . . . Reservato sibi, si voluerint, usufructuario. Atque ita omnia obstruantur, ut nulla suspicio permaneat puero, per quam deceptus perire possit . . . quod experimento didicimus."—*Reg.*, c. 59.

for monastic life. First, the children confided in their youth by their parents to the monastery, or received by the charity of the monks; the rule prescribes their education with minute solicitude: then the young men and mature men who came out of the world to knock at the door of the cloister. Far from encouraging them, Benedict ordains that they should be left there for four or five days without opening to them, in order to try their perseverance. If they persevered, they were introduced into the apartments provided for guests, and from thence, at the end of some days, into the *novitiate*. Here the novice was intrusted to an old monk, skilful in the art of gaining souls, who was charged to study closely his vocation and character, and to tell him the difficulties, the humiliations, and discomforts, which he would meet in the hard path of obedience. If after two months he promised to persevere, the entire rule was read to him, and the reading concluded in these words: "Behold the law under which thou wouldst fight: if thou canst observe it, enter; if thou canst not, depart in freedom!"[1] Three times during the year of novitiate

[1] "Si perseveraverit pulsans, et illatas sibi injurias . . . patienter portare. . . . Senior ei talis deputatur, qui aptus sit ad lucrandas animas . . . omnino curiose intendat. . . . Prædicentur ei omnia dura et aspera. . . . Ecce lex sub qua militare vis: si potes observare, ingredere; si vero non potes, liber discede."—*Reg.*, c. 58. Chapters 60 and 61 indicate the precautions to be taken for the reception of priests or monks who present themselves to be received, having left their former monastery. The *Rule* forbids them to be received without the consent of the abbot of the monastery which they have left.

this trial was renewed. When the year had expired, if the novice persevered, he was warned that shortly he should no longer have the power of leaving the monastery, and of laying aside the rule which he had only accepted after such mature deliberation. It was intimated to him that he was about to lose the power of disposing of himself.[1] Introduced into the oratory in presence of all the community, he there, before God and his saints, promised *stability* or perpetual residence, and also reformation of his morals and obedience, under pain of eternal damnation. He made a declaration of this, written with his own hand, and placed it upon the altar, then threw himself at the feet of each of the brethren, begging them to pray for him. From that day he was considered a member of the community.

Vow of stability.

Almost all the ancient monks had adopted a sort of novitiate, and various vows, more or less formal. But no regular form had ever been adopted before this wise and imposing solemnity. Profession had even been often regarded as acknowledged by the sole fact of taking the monastic dress, and there were instances of this even after St Benedict.[2] But the *vow of stability* imposed by the new legislator,

[1] "Ex illo die nec proprii corporis potestatem se habiturum sciat." —*Reg.*, c. 58.

[2] This was called *professio tacita*. We shall hereafter see it exemplified in the case of Frideburg, the betrothed of King Sigebert, in the life of St Gall; of King Wamba in Spain, and of the English nuns, quoted by St Anselm, lib. iii. epist. 157.

which no former rule had prescribed, was a happy and productive innovation, and became one of the principal guarantees of the duration and strength of cenobitical life.[1] Besides, no material or legal constraint at that time held the monk to his vow; even his secular dress was preserved with care, to be restored to him if he unfortunately desired to leave the monastery.

Details of the Rule.

Now that we perceive the general spirit and foundation of the rule of St Benedict, we may be permitted to pass rapidly over the details. The seventy-three chapters of which it is composed are divided as follows:—nine touch upon the general duties of the abbot and the monks; thirteen upon worship and the divine services; twenty-nine upon discipline, faults, and penalties; ten upon the internal administration of the monastery; twelve upon various subjects, such as the reception of guests, the conduct of the brethren while travelling, &c.

Thirteen hundred years have passed since the hand of Benedict traced all those minute regulations, and nothing has been found more fit to

[1] Some will be astonished, perhaps, not to see in the rule of St Benedict, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which they consider as the essence of monastic life; but if the latter alone is mentioned, it is because the two others were implied in the very condition of monk by all the previous canons of the Church relative to the monastic institution. Now, St Benedict only laid claim to *regulate* that institution, not to create it. They were bound to continence and poverty—that is to say, to possess nothing in their own right, by the mere fact of becoming monks, as they were restricted from marrying—by the mere fact of being ordained subdeacons, without taking on this subject any verbal engagement.

strengthen the religious spirit and monastic life. The most admired and effectual reforms have scarcely had any other aim than to lead back the regular clergy to a code of which time has only confirmed the wisdom and increased the authority.

Among all these details of the rule, the scrupulous care which the legislator has taken to bind the Religious to the careful celebration of divine worship, according to the liturgical usage of the Roman Church, is specially remarkable. They were to give themselves to prayer, chanted aloud by the community, first in the night, at vigils, which began about two in the morning and continued until dawn; then six times during the day—at prime, tierce, sexte, nones, vespers, and compline. The hundred and fifty psalms of David were divided among these seven services in such a manner that the whole psalter should be chanted every week; and this prayer in common was not to interrupt mental devotion, which, during the remaining time, was to be short and simple.[1] The liturgy.

Then come these noble rules of sobriety, which, as Bossuet says, take everything superfluous from nature, and spare her all anxiety in respect to that which is necessary, and which are but a reproduction of the customs of the first Christians. To serve each other by turns in cooking and at the table; to eat, in silence, listening to the reading of some pious book, of two cooked dishes and one Food.

[1] *Reg.*, c. 8, 19, 20.

uncooked, with a pound of bread and a *hemine* of wine,[1] whether they made two meals in the day or only one; to abstain from all flesh of quadrupeds; and to increase the number and severity of the fasts appointed by the Church.[2] To have for clothing only a tunic, with a *cowl* for the choir, and a *scapulary* for work:[2] this was nothing else than the hooded frock of the ploughman and shepherds, borrowed from that of the slaves of pagan times, such as Columella has described.[3] To sleep in one general dormitory; to sleep but little, and

Clothing.

[2] *Ibid.*, c. 39. The dessert was not included in these two dishes, or *pulmentaria cocta.* "Si fuerint poma aut nascentia leguminum, addatur et tertium." It is probable that the pound of bread prescribed by the rule was much more considerable than the modern pound, since it was ordered that they should reserve a third of it for supper. It has long been disputed what was the exact amount of the *hemine* of wine. The most general opinion is that it was equivalent to a setier, or a little more than a pint.—D. CALMET, t. ii. p. 68-73.

[1] They were to fast every day from the middle of September till the beginning of Lent, and during Lent only to eat after vespers.—*Reg.*, c. 41.

[2] *Ibid.*, c. 55. The tunic is a robe with long sleeves, without a hood, which was used as a shirt; it was first white, and was subsequently changed into black, when the monks had shirts of wool or of coarse cloth. The cowl, *cuculla*, became a large mantle with a cowl, which they put on for the offices of the choir; large sleeves were subsequently added to it: this is black among all the Benedictines. It was also called frock, *floccus*, especially in the order of Cluny. The scapulary consists of two pieces of cloth joined round the neck, with a hood, and which hangs one part in front and the other behind: the length varies; it extends even below the tunic for the leaders of the choir, and to the knees only of the converts. The rule allowed to the monks for covering for the feet *caligæ et pedules*, by which were generally meant hose, or stockings and shoes. *Femoralia* were only allowed when they travelled on horseback. "Qui in via diriguntur de vestiario accipiant femoralia, quæ revertentes lota ibi restituant." Lastly, a narrow girdle of leather completed the costume of the monk.

[3] *De Re Rustica*, lib. i. c. 8, p. 445, ed. Gesner, 1772.

always in their clothes and shoes;[1] and finally, to keep an almost continual silence during the whole day.[2] Such were the minute and salutary regulations which authorised Benedict to declare that the life of a monk ought to be a perpetual Lent.[3]

And there were other rules still better adapted to root out from the hearts of the Religious even the last allurements of pride, voluptuousness, and avarice. They could not receive either letter or present,[4] even from their nearest relatives, without the permission of the abbot. In accepting the rule, they pledged themselves beforehand to bear patiently public and humiliating penances for the smallest faults, and even corporeal punishment,[5] in case of murmuring or repetition of the offence, and this while still subject to temporary excommunication and final exclusion. But mercy appeared by the side of severity: the excluded brother who desired to return, promising amendment, was to be received anew, and three times in succession, before he was banished for ever from the community. Penalties.

However, in going back to the austerity of the ancient Fathers of the desert, Benedict does not hesitate to say, in the preamble of his rule, as has

[1] *Reg.*, c. 22. The custom in ancient times, which was continued even in the middle ages, was, as we know, to sleep without clothing.

[2] *Ibid.*, c. 42.

[3] *Ibid.*, c. 49.

[4] "Quælibet munuscula."—*Ibid.*, c. 54.

[5] *Ibid.*, c. 23 and 28.—"Si etiam excommunicatus non emendaverit, acrior ei accedat correctio, id est, ut verberum vindicta in eum procedat." See also for other penances, c. 43-46.

been seen, that he believed he had ordained nothing too hard or too difficult to be followed; and he ends by declaring that it was only a *little beginning*, a modest introduction to Christian perfection.[1]

Such are the most remarkable features of this famous code, which has ruled so many souls for so many ages, and which, although it has lost almost all its subjects, remains, notwithstanding, one of the most imposing monuments of Christian genius. Compared to the previous Oriental rules, it bears that seal of Roman wisdom, and that adaptation to Western customs, which has made it, according to the idea of Gregory the Great, a masterpiece of clearness and discretion,[2] in which judges who are above all suspicion have not hesitated to recognise a character of good sense and gentleness, humanity and moderation, superior to everything that could be found up to that time in either Roman or Barbarian laws, or in the habits of civil society.[3]

No kind of praise has been wanting to this code of monastic life. St Gregory, St Thomas, St Hildegard, and St Antoninus, believed it to be directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. Popes and Christian princes have vied with each other in celebrating it. The prince of Catholic eloquence has described it in these incomparable lines :—

[1] "In qua institutione nihil asperum, nihilque grave nos constituturos speramus."—*Prologus Regulæ.* "Initium conversationis . . . hanc minimam inchoationis regulam."—*Reg.*, c. 73.

[2] "Discretione præcipuam, sermone luculentam."—*Dial.*, ii. 36.

[3] GUIZOT, *l. c.* Compare DOM PITRA, *l. c.*

"This *rule* is an epitome of Christianity, a learned and mysterious abridgment of all the doctrines of the gospel, all the institutions of the holy Fathers, and all the counsels of perfection. Here prudence and simplicity, humility and courage, severity and gentleness, freedom and dependence, eminently appear. Here, correction has all its firmness; condescension all its charm; command all its vigour, and subjection all its repose; silence its gravity, and words their grace; strength its exercise, and weakness its support; and yet always, my Fathers, he calls it *a beginning*, to keep you always in holy fear."[1] Summary of the Rule by Bossuet.

But there is something which speaks with a still greater eloquence than that of Bossuet in honour of the Benedictine rule; it is the list of saints which it has produced; it is the tale of conquests which it has won and consolidated throughout the West, where for eight centuries it reigned alone; the irresistible attraction which it had for bright and generous minds, for upright and devoted hearts, for souls enamoured of solitude and sacrifice; the beneficent influence which it exercised upon the life of the secular clergy, warming them, by its rays, to such a point that, purified and strengthened, they seemed for a time to identify themselves with the children of Benedict. It is distinguished above all by the contrast between the exuberant life of faith and spirituality in the countries where it reigned, and the

[1] Bossuet, *Panégyrique de Saint Benoît.*

utter debasement into which the Oriental Church, dishonoured by the marriage of its priests even before it became a prey to schism and Islamism, had fallen.

Benedict's vision of the future fate of his work.

St Gregory relates that the man of God whose life he writes, having one night anticipated the hour of matins, and gazing upon heaven from the window of his cell, saw all at once the darkness dispelled by a light more dazzling than that of day; and, amid that ocean of light, the entire world appeared to him crowded into a ray of the sun, "so paltry does the creature appear," adds the pontiff, "to the soul which contemplates the Creator!"[1] Tradition has interpreted that sight as a vision of the splendid future awaiting the order which Benedict was about to form, and which was to embrace the Christian universe, and fill it with light. A lively and faithful image, in fact, of the destiny of an institution, the future course of which, perhaps, its founder only foresaw under that mysterious form!

The admiration of Catholic doctors has signalised in Benedict the Moses of a new people, the Joshua of another promised land.[2] Nothing that he has said or written permits us to believe that he had

[1] "Omnis etiam mundus, velut sub uno solis radio collectus, ante oculos ejus adductus est. . . . Quia animæ videnti Creatorem angusta est omnis creatura."—*Dial.*, ii. 34. The inscription in the tower of Monte Cassino, inhabited by St Benedict, says, "Universum mundum divini solis radio detectum inspexit semel et despexit." St Bonaventura explains this vision thus: "Mundus non fuit coangustatus in uno radio solis, sed ejus animus dilatatus, quia vidit omnia in illo cujus magnitudine omnis creatura angusta est."—*De Luminaribus*, serm. 20.

[2] S. Odo; S. Thomas, *Serm. de S. Bened.*

any such idea of himself. Historians have vied in praising his genius and clear-sightedness; they have supposed that he intended to regenerate Europe, to stop the dissolution of society, to prepare the reconstitution of political order, to re-establish public education, and to preserve literature and the arts. I know not whether he entertained such grand plans, but I can see no trace of them either in his rule or his life. If they ever penetrated into his soul, it was only to be eclipsed and replaced by a still higher and greater idea, by thought of salvation. I firmly believe that he never dreamt of regenerating anything but his own soul and those of his brethren the monks. All the rest has been given him over and above "the one thing needful." What is most to be admired in his social and historical influence is, that he seems never to have dreamt of it. But is it not a sign of true greatness to achieve great things without any pompous commotion, without preconceived ideas, without premeditation, under the sole empire of a modest and pure design, which God exalts and multiplies a hundred-fold? Strange to say, nothing even in his rule itself indicates that it was written with the idea of governing other monasteries besides his own. He might have supposed that it would be adopted by communities in the neighbourhood of those which he had collected round him; but nothing betrays any intention of establishing a common link of subordination between them, or of forming a bond

He did not foresee its great social and historical results.

between different religious houses, in order to originate an association of different and co-ordinate elements, like the great orders which have since arisen.[1] The object of his rule, on the contrary, seems to have been the concentration in a single home of the greatness and strength of the monastic spirit. Everything is adapted to that single monastic family, which, by a wonderful arrangement of Providence, has been constituted the stem of such productive and innumerable branches. Like Romulus, who, tracing the primitive walls of Rome, never dreamt of that King-People, that greatest of nations, to which he was giving birth, Benedict did not foresee the gigantic work which was destined to issue from the grotto of Subiaco and the hillside of Monte Cassino. The masters of spiritual life have always remarked, that the man who begins a work blessed of God does it unawares. God loves to build upon nothing.

And what is truly serviceable to man is to see the greatness of God issuing out of his own nothingness, and to recognise in that spectacle the productive power given to himself, when he triumphs over fallen nature, so as to become again the lieutenant and instrument of God.

Greatness of its results.

However it might be, the results of Benedict's work were immense. In his lifetime, as after his death, the sons of the noblest races in Italy, and the best of the converted Barbarians, came in mul-

[1] YEPES, *Coron. Gener.*; HÆFTEN, *Disquisit.*, lib. i. p. 12.

titudes to Monte Cassino. They came out again, and descended from it to spread themselves over all the West; missionaries and husbandmen, who were soon to become the doctors and pontiffs, the artists and legislators, the historians and poets of the new world. They went forth to spread peace and faith, light and life, freedom and charity, knowledge and art, the Word of God and the genius of man, the Holy Scriptures and the great works of classical literature, amid the despairing provinces of the destroyed empire, and even into the barbarous regions from which the destruction came forth. Less than a century after the death of Benedict, all that barbarism had won from civilisation was re-conquered; and more still, his children took in hand to carry the Gospel beyond those limits which had confined the first disciples of Christ. After Italy, Gaul, and Spain had been retaken from the enemy, Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia were in turn invaded, conquered, and incorporated into Christendom.[1] The West was saved. A new empire was founded. A new world began.

Come now, O Barbarians! the Church no longer fears you. Reign where you will; civilisation shall escape your hands. Or rather it is you who shall defend the Church, and confirm civilisation. You have vanquished everything, conquered everything, overthrown everything; you shall now be in your

[1] "Et quidem Europa fere tota, Benedicti sæculo, monachis adlaborantibus, veram religionem suscepit."—MABILLON, *Præf. in* 1 *sæcul.*, c. 2.

turn vanquished, conquered, and transformed. Men are born who shall become your masters. They shall take your sons, and even the sons of your kings, to enroll them in their army. They shall take your daughters, your queens, your princesses, to fill their monasteries. They shall take your souls to inspire them; your imaginations to delight and purify them; your courage to temper it by sacrifice; your swords to consecrate them to the service of faith, weakness, and justice.

The world reconquered from the Barbarians by the monks.

The work will be neither short nor easy; but they will accomplish it. They will govern the new nations by showing them the ideal of sanctity, of moral force, and greatness. They will make them the instruments of goodness and truth. Aided by these victors of Rome, they will carry the sway and laws of a new Rome beyond the furthest limits ever fixed by the Senate, or dreamt of by the Cæsars. They will conquer and bless lands which neither the Roman eagles nor even the apostles have reached. They will become the nursing fathers of all modern nations. They will be seen beside the thrones of Charlemagne, of Alfred, and of Otto the Great, forming with them Christian kingdoms and a new world. Finally, they will ascend the apostolic See with St Gregory the Great and St Gregory VII., from which they will preside, during ages of conflict and virtue, over the destinies of Catholic Europe and of the Church, gloriously assisted by races faithful, manful, and free.

BOOK V.

ST GREGORY THE GREAT.—MONASTIC ITALY AND SPAIN IN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES.

SUMMARY.

CASSIODORUS: his monastic retreat and his Christian academy at Viviers in Calabria.—The disciples of Benedict in Sicily: martyrdom of St Placidus.—BENEDICTINE MISSION AND MARTYR MONKS IN ITALY. —Ravages of the Lombards: they overthrow Farfa and Novalese.—First destruction of Monte Cassino.

ST GREGORY THE GREAT: his birth, his conversion; he becomes a monk at the monastery of St. Andrea; his alms and fasts.—He is nuncio at Constantinople, afterwards abbot of his monastery; his severity against individual property.—His desire to go to convert the Angles: the Romans detain him.—HE IS ELECTED POPE, to his very great grief: his plaintive letters on leaving the cloister.—State of the world and of the Church at his accession.—Italy at once abandoned and ground down by the Byzantine emperors.—RELATIONS OF GREGORY WITH THE LOMBARDS: he defends Rome against them.—Homilies on Ezekiel interrupted.—Mediation between Byzantium and the Lombards: Agilulf and Theodelinda.—Conversion of the Lombards.—Dialogues on the ancient monks.—HIS STRUGGLES AGAINST THE GREEKS.—Conflict with John the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, with reference to the title of universal bishop: he desires for himself only the title of servant of the servants of God.—Conflict with the Emperor Maurice: law against the admission of soldiers to monasteries; celebrated letter to Maurice. —Maurice dethroned and slain by Phocas: congratulations of Gregory to the new emperor; contrast to his courage and habitual rectitude. —He turns towards the new races, becomes their ally and instructor, and thus begins to emancipate the Church and the West from the Byzantine yoke.—HIS RELATIONS WITH THE FRANKS AND THE BURGUNDIANS: Virgilius of Arles; Brunehaut; letter to the young king Childe-

bert.—Celebrated charter of Autun, in which the temporal supremacy of the Papacy over royalty is proclaimed.—Relations with the bishops of Neustria.—His respect for the episcopate and for the freedom of episcopal elections.—His vast correspondence: universal vigilance.—Order re-established in St Peter's patrimony.—He protects peasants, freemen, slaves, Jews.—His conduct towards the pagans and the Donatists.—Services rendered to the Liturgy and religious art; Gregorian Chants; musical education.—Ridiculous slander respecting his antipathy to classical literature.—His WRITINGS: *The Sacramentary, The Pastoral, The Morals:* letters and homilies.—He is the fourth great doctor of the Church.—His extreme humility.—HE REMAINS ALWAYS A MONK, and renders the most signal services to the monastic order: he confirms the rule of St Benedict at the Council of Rome, and shields the liberty and property of the monks.—Exemptions.—Rigorous distinction between monastic life and the ecclesiastical state.—Monastic discipline is reformed and enforced.—History of Venantius, the married monk.—Nunneries.—Gregory watches over the freedom and sincerity of vocations.—Catella, the young slave.—The Abbey of Classe, at Ravenna, protected against the metropolitan; monastic foundations in Isauria and Jerusalem.—He always regrets the cloistral life, and habitually surrounds himself with monks; he makes them bishops and legates.—Charities and monastic hospitality.—His cruel sufferings; his last letters.—He dies.—Ingratitude of the Romans.—He is avenged by posterity.—His true greatness.

THE MONKS IN SPAIN: origin of the order in Spain conquered by the Arian Visigoths.—St Donatus, St Emilian, St Martin of Dumes.—St Leander, monk and bishop of Seville.—School of Seville.—Martyrdom of Hermenegild; exile of Leander: he meets St Gregory at Constantinople; their mutual tenderness.—Conversion of King Recarede and of the Visigoth nation, under the auspices of Leander: their relations with Gregory.—The family of Leander: his sister Florentine.—His brother Isidore: action of the latter on the monastic order and Spain; his writings.—St Braulius.—Visigothic formula of monastic foundations.—School of Toledo: Abbey of Agali.—Ildefonso of Toledo, monk and bishop, the most popular saint of that period.—Councils of Toledo: part played by the bishops; intervention of the laity; decrees and doctrines upon royalty.—Harshness against the Jews.—The *Fuero Juezgo*, issued by the Councils of Toledo.—King Wamba made monk in spite of himself.—Monastic extension in Lusitania.—St Fructuosus and his kind.—The monks dwell on the shores of the Ocean waiting for the conquest and invasion of the New World.

BOOK V.

ST GREGORY THE GREAT.

Quemadmodum radii solis contingunt quidem terram, sed ibi sunt unde mittuntur, sic animus magnus et sacer, et in hoc demissus ut propius divina nossemus, conversatur quidem nobiscum, sed hæret origini suæ; illinc pendet, illinc spectat ac nititur.—SENECA, *Epist.* 41.

I.—MONASTIC ITALY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY.

EVEN before the death of Benedict, the most illustrious of his contemporaries had sought in monastic life an interval of repose and freedom between his public career and his grave. Cassiodorus, who had been for thirty years the honour and light of the Gothic monarchy, the minister and the friend of five kings, abandoned the court of Ravenna and all his offices and dignities,[1] towards the year 538, to found, at the extremity of Italy, a monastery called Viviers (*Vivaria*), which at one time seemed destined to rival Monte Cassino itself in importance.

Cassiodorus becomes a monk at Viviers.

Cassiodorus belonged to the high Roman nobility: his ancestors had seats at once in the senates of Rome and Constantinople. His fortune was im-

470-562.

[1] "Repulsis in Ravennati urbe sollicitudinibus dignitatum et curis sæcularibus."—CASSIOD., *Præf. in Psalm.*

His political career.

mense. Successively a senator, a quæstor, and prefect of the pretorium, he was the last of the great men who held the office of consul, which Justinian abolished. He obtained, finally, that title of patrician, which Clovis and Charlemagne considered themselves honoured in receiving. His credit survived all the revolutions of that terrible age. He was successively the minister of Odoacer, of Theodoric, of his daughter Amalasontha, and of his grandson Athalaric, who made him prefect of the pretorium. He retained that office under the kings Theodatus and Vitiges. He allied in his own person the virtues of the old Romans to those of the new Christians, as in his titles the dignities of the republic were conjoined to those of the empire. Full of respect for the popes and bishops, he was also full of solicitude for the people. An intelligent and courageous mediator between the Barbarian conquerors and the conquered population, he was able to give to the Ostrogoth royalty that protecting and civilising character which it retained for some time.

Reign of Theodoric. 493-526.

To him must be attributed the finest portion of the great reign of Theodoric, who would have deserved to be the forerunner of Charlemagne, if he had contracted with the Church that alliance which alone could guarantee and fertilise the future. But, although an Arian, this great prince long protected the religious liberty of the Catholics; and during the greater part of his reign, the Church gained more by his benevolent indifference than

by the oppressive and trifling intervention of the crowned theologians who reigned in Byzantium. Influenced by his pious and orthodox minister, he said nobly and wisely, that to him, as king, nothing beyond reverence with regard to ecclesiastical affairs pertained.[1] Cassiodorus, who filled the office of chancellor under him, showed in his official acts the great principles he held, and which most Christian doctors up to that time had appealed to. "We cannot," said he, in the name of Theodoric, "command religion, for no man can be forced to believe against his will;"[2] and to one of his successors, "Since God suffers several religions, we dare not impose one alone. We remember to have read, that a sacrifice to God must be made voluntarily, and not in obedience to a master. A man who attempts to act otherwise evidently opposes himself to the Divine commands."[3] Two centuries after the peace of the Church, he continued thus faithful to the great apologists of the time of the imperial persecutions: to Tertullian, who said, "Religion forbids us to constrain any one to be religious; she would have

[1] "Nec aliquid ad se præter reverentiam de ecclesiasticis negotiis pertinere."

[2] "Religionem imperare non possumus, quia nemo cogitur ut credat invitus."—*Letter of Theodoric to the Jews*, ap. CASSIOD., lib. ii. ep. 27.

[3] "Cum Divinitas patiatur diversas religiones esse, nos unam non audemus imponere. Retenimus enim legisse nos voluntarie sacrificandum esse Domino, non cujusquam cogentis imperio. Quod qui aliter facere tentaverit, evidenter cœlestibus jussionibus obviavit."—*Letter of Theodatus to Justinian*, ap. CASSIOD., lib. x. ep. 26.

consent, and not constraint;"[1] and to Lactantius, according to whom, "To defend religion, one must know how to die, and not how to kill."[2]

Afterwards, when, unfaithful to his earliest policy, Theodoric arrogated to himself the right of interfering in the election of the Roman pontiffs—when he had dishonoured the end of his career by cruelties of which Boëthius, Symmachus, and the holy pope, John I., were victims—when his daughter Amalasontha, whose reign was so happy for Italy, had perished by assassination—Cassiodorus, who, amongst all those crimes, had devoted all his energies and perseverance to preserve authority from its own excesses, to soften the manners of the Goths, and guarantee the rights of the Romans, grew weary of that superhuman task. No danger nor disgrace threatened him, for all the sovereigns who, after Theodoric, succeeded each other on the bloody throne of Ravenna, seem to have vied in seeking or conciliating him; but he had experienced enough of it. He was nearly seventy years old; fifty years had been passed in the most elevated employments; he had wielded a power almost sovereign, but always tempered by reason and faith. He resolved to end his life in monastic solitude. With him disappeared the glory and prosperity of the kingdom of the Goths in Italy.

[1] "Non est religionis cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debet, non vi."—*Ad Scapulam*, in fin.

[2] "Defendenda religio est non occidendo, sed moriendo; non sævitia, sed patientia; non scelere, sed fide."

This was the first, after the downfall of the Roman empire, of these striking conversions, an innumerable series of which will pass before our eyes, which, even in the highest ranks of the new society, sought out the great ones of the world, to teach them how to expiate their grandeur, to rest from their power, and to put an interval between the agitations of the world and the judgment of God.

But in assuming the monastic frock, Cassiodorus seems to have recommenced to live. This religious profession offered as many attractions to his soul as employments to his activity. The monastery of Viviers, which he had built on the patrimonial estate where he was born, at the extremity of Calabria, on the shores of the Gulf of Squillace, took its name from numerous *vivaria*, or fish-ponds, which had been hollowed in the rock. It was a delightful dwelling, which he has described affectionately in terms worthy of that delicious region, where the azure sea bathes a shore clad with incomparable and perpetual verdure. The building was vast and magnificent; at a distance it appeared like an entire town. There were two monasteries for the numerous disciples who collected round the illustrious old man. Besides these, some who believed themselves called to a life more austere than that of the cenobites whose dwelling extended along the smiling shores of the sea, found, by ascending the mountain which overlooked them, isolated cells

Monastery and Christian academy of Viviers.

where they could taste in all its purity the delight of absolute solitude.[1]

Monastic life and literary labours of Cassiodorus.

Cassiodorus himself, successively a monk and abbot, passed nearly thirty years in that retreat, occupied in governing his community, and uniting the study of literature and science with the pursuit of spiritual life. During his political career, he had made use of his power, with energy and solicitude, to maintain public education and intellectual life in that poor Italy, which was periodically overrun by floods of ignorant and rude conquerors. He has been declared, not without reason, the hero and restorer of knowledge in the sixth century.[2] As soon as he became a monk, he made his monastery a kind of Christian academy, and the principal centre of the literary activity of his time. He had there collected an immense library; he imposed upon his monks a complete and severe plan of study. His own example enforced his precepts; he instructed them with unwearied zeal in the Holy Scriptures, for the study of which he, in concert with Pope Agapetus, had attempted in vain to establish public professors in Rome. He added to this the study of the seven liberal arts, and profane literature in general. It was at Viviers that he composed most of his works, and especially his famous

[1] "Habetis Montis Castelli secreta suavia, ubi, velut anachoretæ, præstante Domino, feliciter esse possitis, . . . si prius in corde vestro præparatus sit adscensus."—CASSIOD., *De Instit. Divin. Litter.*, c. 19.

[2] F. DE SAINTE-MARTHE, *Vie de Cassiodore*, 1684. Compare MABILLON, *Annal. Bened.*, lib. v. c. 24, 27.

Treatise upon the Teaching of Sacred Literature,[1] a kind of elementary encyclopædia, which was the code of monastic education, and served long as a programme to the intellectual education of the new nations. At eighty-three he had the courage to commence a treatise upon orthography, in order to assist in the correction of ancient copies of the holy books.

Cassiodorus thus gave, amid his numerous community, one of the first and most illustrious models of that alliance of monastic and intellectual life which has distinguished the monastic order. The literary enthusiasm which inspired the noble old man served only to redouble his zeal for the strict observance of monastic regularity. "God grant to us grace," he wrote, "to be like the untiring oxen to cultivate the field of our Lord with the plough of observance and regular exercises."[2] It is scarcely known what rule he adopted. Some have believed that it was that of St Benedict; but he has made no special mention of it in recommending his monks to follow the rules of the Fathers generally, along with the orders of their own superior, and to consult the institutes of Cassianus.[3] However, a strong analogy may at least be recognised between the usages practised at Viviers and the great example of St Benedict, in the directions given by Cassiodorus on the subject of manual

[1] *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum.* "Quem monachi omnes accurate legere deberent."—MABILLON, l. c.

[2] *In Præf. Explic. Psalm.* [3] *De Div. Litt.*, c. 32 and 29.

labour. He desires that those who are not capable of study, or of transcribing manuscript, should apply themselves to agriculture and gardening, especially for the relief of guests and of the infirm.[1] Like Benedict, he recommended them to bestow an affectionate solicitude upon travellers, and upon the poor and sick in the neighbourhood. Like Benedict, he desired that the cultivators of monastic lands should share in the temporal and spiritual wellbeing of monastic life. "Instruct your peasants in good morals; oppress them not with heavy or new burdens; call them often to your festivals, that they may not blush, if there is occasion for it, for belonging to you, and yet resembling you so little."[2] In short, he seems to follow the rule of Benedict even in its least details, in that which concerns the nocturnal and almost perpetual psalms which characterised monastic worship, and which he explains as follows to his numerous disciples: "During the silence of night, the voices of men bursting forth in chants and in words sung by art and measure brings us back to him from whom the divine word came to us, for the salvation of the human race. . . . All who sing form but a single voice, and we mingle our music with the praises of God, chanted by angels, although we cannot hear them."[3]

Into the same region where the Roman minister of the Gothic kingdom completed his glorious career

[1] *De Div. Litt.*, c. 28. [2] *Ibid.*, c. 32.
[3] *Præfat. in Psalter.*

but beyond these Straits of Faro, which doubtless exhibited then, as now, an enchanting scene of nature, other monks had likewise penetrated. The cherished disciple of St Benedict, the son of the rich senator who had so generously endowed the new-born community of Subiaco, the young Placidus, had brought to Sicily the name and rule of his master. He had been sent there to recover the eighteen estates situated in that island, which his father had given to the Abbot of Monte Cassino, and the profits of which had been lost by unfaithful stewardship. He remained there, and established, towards the year 534, at Messina, the first Benedictine monastery which was formed out of Italy. Placidus collected there thirty monks, but was too soon interrupted in his work of religious colonisation.[1] He perished with two of his brethren and his young sister Flavia, tortured and slain by a band of Moorish pirates, still pagans, and who, like so many other ruffians, made the monks the principal victims of their fury. The children of St Benedict inaugurated thus the long series of their struggles and victories. The blood of Placidus watered the seeds of the order in Sicily, where its harvest, even up to our own days, has been so abundant.[2]

Martyrdom of St Placidus in Sicily.

[1] We do not venture to relate here many very interesting features in the life of the first disciple of St Benedict, because his Acts, attributed to one of his companions, the monk Gordian, have undergone very numerous interpolations, according to the unanimous opinion of Baronius, Mabillon, and the Bollandists.

[2] There were at that time, and subsequently, many monasteries in

We have said that the monks came to replace the martyrs, but that often also they imitated and joined their band. It was thus during the rise of the Benedictine order in Italy. Its extension was rapid during the last years of Benedict's life, and especially after his death. The tomb where the holy remains of the great legislator rested, under the guardianship of a line of fervent disciples constantly renewed, became the spring from which a new life flowed forth upon the peninsula.[1] Most of the ancient monasteries adopted the rule which flourished at Monte Cassino. It spread through Latium in the environs of Lake Fucino, where the holy abbot Equitius, shod with nailed shoes, made hay with his monks, and returned, after the hot and laborious day, with his scythe on his shoulder like any other labourer.[2] It was carried to the summit of Mount Soracte, where more than one brave solitary, well worthy of practising it, waited its coming, and where the gentle prior Nonnosus laboured the rocky sides of the mountain celebrated by Virgil and Horace, to make gardens and olive-orchards for the use of his brethren.[3] It prevailed in several of the twenty-two religious

Extension of the order in Italy.

Sicily inhabited by Greek monks, who followed the rule of St Basil.—YEPES, *Chronica General.*, ii. 2.

[1] "Te monachorum turbæ diu noctuque concelebrant, corpus tuum in medio positum servantes, quod largos miraculorum fluvios effudit."—*Menées de l'Eglise Grecque*, ap. DOM GUÉRANGER, *Carême*, p. 581.

[2] "Clavatis calceatus caligis, falcem ferrariam in collo deferens veniebat."—S. GREG., *Dial.*, lib. 4.

[3] V. S. GREGOR., *Dial.*, lib. i. c. 7, on Nonnosus and Anastasius.

houses which already existed at Rome.[1] It soon extended into the isles of the Mediterranean and Adriatic, which we have seen to be already occupied by monks, and especially into those which lay near the coast of Naples, whither, under the hideous tyranny of the first Cæsars, men accused of high treason had been banished, and where the love of heavenly things and spiritual freedom retained many voluntary exiles. Thus, throughout the whole peninsula, numerous companies of monks laboriously struggled, amidst the general confusion, against the depravity of Roman manners, against the violence of the Barbarians. Their lives afforded these lessons of austere virtue and miraculous power, the memory of which St Gregory the Great has associated in his *Dialogues* with that of their holy patriarch. They died as they had lived, and braved martyrdom in public places as well as in the depth of woods. Upon the faith of that great doctor, the faithful have related from generation to generation, how the monk Herculanus, bishop of Perugia, when that city was besieged and destroyed by the Goths under Totila, was sacrificed amid tortures, as the principal author of the resistance; how, in the Roman Campagna, the abbot Suranus was slain by the Lombards, who found him hidden in the hollow of an oak; and how, elsewhere, the same Lombards hung the monks, two by two, to the same tree.[2]

Monks martyred by the Lombards.

[1] BARONIUS, *Martyrol.*, 5 Dec. Amongst these the monasteries of St Sabas and St Erasmus held the first rank.

[2] S. GREG., *Dial.*, iv. 21.

For the Lombards were already there. Scarcely had the Goths, who fell into their premature decay after Theodoric and Cassiodorus, disappeared, when a new race of Barbarians crossed the Alps and descended upon Italy. They were proud, intelligent, and warlike, Arian by name, but still, in fact, half-pagan, and a thousand times more cruel and dreaded than the Goths.[1] Under Alboin and his successors they ravaged the peninsula without pity, trampling under foot Greeks and Romans, Catholics and Arians, priests and laymen. Ruined cities, desecrated churches, murdered bishops and clergy, and exterminated nations, were everywhere seen in their track.[2] These ferocious conquerors reaped everything, and left only a desert behind them. The end of the world was supposed to have come.[3] They were especially furious against monks and monasteries. They burned and destroyed, among others, two considerable abbeys, the origin of which is unknown—Novalese, situated upon a plateau on the south side of the Piedmontese Alps; and Farfa, which imagined itself secure, hid among the fresh foliage of the Sabine woods, sung by Ovid—

"Et amœnæ Farfaris umbræ."

These names, destined to be so celebrated in

[1] Their first invasion took place in 568, at the solicitation of Narses.

[2] ANASTASIUS, *Liber Pontif.*, c. 32.

[3] "Mox effera gens Longobardorum de vagina suæ habitationis educta in nostram cervicem grassata est, atque humanum genus . . . succisum aruit. . . . Depopulatæ urbes, . . . *destructa monasteria*

religious history, yet the first appearance of which is marked by disaster, must be noted.

A great number of monks received martyrdom from the hands of these new persecutors; others, hunted from their first asylum, and wandering through the different parts of Italy, carried with them the seeds of monastic life into countries which, without that storm, they might never have reached.

Finally, the Lombards ascended Monte Cassino, and pillaged and burned that already famous sanctuary, according to the prediction of Benedict, forty years before; but, as he had also predicted,[1] they could destroy nothing which had life, and did not take a single monk. Although the attack of the Lombards took place by night, and while the monks were asleep, they were all able to flee, bearing with them, as their entire fortune, the rule written by their founder, with the measure of wine and the pound of bread which he had prescribed.[2] They took refuge at Rome; Pope Pelagius II.[3] gave them a paternal reception, and permitted them to build, near the Lateran palace, a monastery in which the children of Benedict were to await for a cen-

virorum ac feminarum, . . . occupaverunt bestiæ loca quæ prius multitudo hominum tenebat."—S. GREGOR. MAGN., *Dial.*, iii. 38, *Epist.*, iii. 29.

[1] "Res, non animas."—*Epist.*, iv. 17.

[2] In 580, under Bonitus, fourth abbot after St Benedict.

[3] According to Yepes and some other authors, this pope, like his predecessor, Benedict I., was a monk; but we find no proof of this assertion.

tury and a half the happy day which was to witness their return to their holy mountain.[1]

II.—GREGORY THE GREAT, MONK AND POPE.

But ere long a monk ascended for the first time the apostolical See. This monk, the most illustrious of all those who have been reckoned among the sovereign pontiffs, was to shine there with a splendour which none of his predecessors had equalled, and which flowed back, like a supreme sanction, upon the institute from which he came. Gregory, who alone among men has received, by universal consent, the double surname of Saint and Great, will be an everlasting honour to the Benedictine order as to the papacy. By his genius, but especially by the charm and ascendancy of his virtue, he was destined to organise the temporal power of the popes, to develop and regulate their spiritual sovereignty, to found their paternal supremacy over the new-born crowns and races which were to become the great nations of the future, and to be called France, Spain, and England. It was he, indeed, who inaugurated the middle ages, modern society, and Christian civilisation.[2]

Issued, like St Benedict, from one of the most illustrious races of ancient Rome, the son of a rich senator, and descendant of Pope Felix III., of the

[1] They only returned to Monte Cassino about 730, under the abbot Petronatius.

[2] Compare Dom Pitra, *Histoire de St Léger*, Introduction.

Anicia family,[1] Gregory was early called to fill a dignified place, which, in the midst of modern Rome, the vassal of Byzantium, and subject to the ceaseless insults of the Barbarians, retained some shadow of ancient Roman grandeur. He was prætor of Rome during the first invasions of the Lombards and the religious troubles stirred up by the fifth general council. In the exercise of this office he gained the hearts of the Romans, while habituating himself to the management of public business, and while acquiring a taste for luxury and display of earthly grandeur, in which he still believed he might serve God without reproach. But God required him elsewhere. Gregory hesitated long, inspired by the divine breath, but retained, led back and fascinated to the world, by the attractions and habits of secular life. At last he yielded to the influence of his intimate and close relations with the refugees of Monte Cassino, the successors and disciples of Benedict;[2] and then, obeying the grace which enlightened him, he abruptly broke every tie, devoted his wealth to

[1] "Ex noblissima et antiquissima Aniciorum familia."—JOAN. DIAC. *in Vit. S. Greg. Magn.* He was born probably in 540, and died in 604.

[2] "Diu longeque conversionis gratiam distuli, et postquam cœlesti sum desiderio afflatus, sæculari habitu contegi melius putavi. Apparebatur enim mihi jam de æternitatis amore quid quærerem: sed inolita me consuetudo devinxerat, ne exteriorem cultum mutarem. Cumque adhuc me cogeret animus . . . cœperunt multa me ex ejusdem mundi cura succrescere, ut in eo jam non specie, sed, quod est gravius, mente retinerer."—*Præfat. ad Job.* The Benedictines who brought about his conversion were Constantine, disciple and successor of St Benedict at Monte Cassino; Simplicius, third abbot of Monte Cassino; and Valentinian, abbot of Latran.

the endowment of six new monasteries in Sicily, and established in his own palace in Rome, upon the Cœlian hill, a seventh, dedicated to St Andrew, into which he introduced the Benedictine rule, and where he himself became a monk.[1] He sold all that remained of his patrimony to distribute it to the poor; and Rome, which had seen the young and wealthy patrician traverse its streets in robes of silk covered with jewels, now saw him, with admiration, clothed like a beggar, serving, in his own person, the beggars lodged in the hospital which he had built at the gate of his paternal house, now changed into a monastery.[2]

He becomes a monk.

575.

His austerities.

Once a monk, he would be nothing less than a model of monks, and practised with the utmost rigour all the austerities sanctioned by the rule, applying himself specially at the same time to the study of the Holy Scriptures. He ate only pulse which his mother, who had become a nun since her widowhood, sent him to his convent, already soaked, in a silver porringer. This porringer was the only remnant of his ancient splendour, and did not remain long in his hands, for one day a shipwrecked

[1] "Mutato repente sæculi habitu."—PAUL. DIAC., *Vit. S. Greg.*, c. 3. Yepes and Mabillon have proved beyond question, against Baronius, that St Gregory professed the rule of St Benedict.—*Act. SS. O. S. B. Præf. in* i. *sæc.* § vii. See also his life by his Benedictine editors, lib. i. c. 3. This monastery of St Andrew, which now bears the name of St Gregory, has been since given to the Camaldules, and from it, thirteen centuries after, issued another Gregory, pope and monk, Gregory XVI.

[2] "Qui ante serico contextu ac gemmis micantibus solitus erat per urbem procedere trabeatus, post vili contectus tegmine ministrabat pauper ipse pauperibus."—PAUL. DIAC., c. 2.

sailor came several times to beg from him while he was writing in his cell, and finding no money in his purse, he gave him that relic of his former wealth. Long after, Gregory saw the shipwrecked man, who appeared to him under the form of his guardian angel, and instructed him that from that day God had destined him to govern his church, and to be the successor of Peter, whose charity he had imitated.[1]

Continually engaged in prayer, reading, writing, or dictation, he persisted in pushing the severity of his fasts to such an extent that his health succumbed, and his life itself was in danger. He fell so often into fainting fits, that more than once, as he himself relates, he should have sunk under them, had not his brethren supported him with more substantial food.[2] In consequence of having attempted to do more than others, he was soon obliged to relinquish even the most ordinary fasts, which everybody observed. He was in despair at not being able to fast even upon Easter eve, a day on which even the little children fast, says his biographer: and aided by the prayers of a holy abbot of Spoleto who had become a monk with him at St Andrea, he obtained from God the grace of strength to observe

[1] "Crudis leguminibus pascebatur. . . . Matris argenteam quæ cum infusis leguminibus mitti solita erat. . . . Ego sum naufragus ille qui quondam veni ad te, quando scribebas in cella. . . . Ab illo destinavit te Dominus fieri præsulem S. suæ Ecclesiæ."—JOAN. DIACON., *Vit. S. Greg.*, i. 10, and ii. 23.

[2] "Nisi me frequenter fratres cibo reficerent, vitalis mihi spiritus funditus interciди videretur."—*Dial.*, iii. 33.

that fast at least. But he remained weak and sickly all his life, and when he left his monastery, it was with health irreparably ruined.

Pope Benedict I. drew him first from the cloister in 577, to raise him to the dignity of one of the seven cardinal-deacons or *regionaries*, who presided over the seven principal divisions of Rome. He yielded, against his own will, to the authority of the pontiff. "When a ship," said he, "is not well moored in port, the storm seizes it, even on the most secure coast. Thus I am plunged again into the ocean of the world, under an ecclesiastical pretext. I learn to appreciate the peace of the monastery by losing it, though I have not been sufficiently careful of defending while I possessed it."[1] It was still worse when Pope Pelagius II. sent him, as *Apocrisiarius* or Nuncio, to the Emperor Tiberius. During this involuntary absence, he was accompanied by several monks of the community, devoting himself with them to study and reading, and following, as much as possible, all the observances of the rule. "By their example," he wrote, "I attach myself to the coast of prayer, as with the cable of an anchor, while my soul is tossed upon the waves of public life."[2]

He is sent as Nuncio to Constantinople. 578.

He discharged the duties of his office, neverthe-

[1] "Navem incaute religatam . . . tempestas excutit; repente me sub prætextu ecclesiastici ordinis in causarum sæcularium pelago referi, et quietem monasterii, quia habendo non fortiter tenui, quam stricte tenenda fuerit, perdendo cognovi."—*Præfat. ad Job.*

[2] "Ad orationis placidum littus, quasi anchoræ fune. . . . Dum causarum sæcularium vertiginibus fluctuaret."—*Præf. Moralium.* Compare *Dial.*, iii. 36; JOAN. DIAC., i. 26. BEDE, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 1.

less, with reputation and success, re-established between the Holy See and the Byzantine court the friendly relations which had been interrupted by the Lombard invasion, and neglected no means to obtain from Tiberius and his successor, Maurice, the help demanded by Rome and Italy, against the terrible invasions, and the more and more oppressive domination, of the Lombards. He also learnt to know the shifts and subterfuges which the Byzantine spirit already employed against Roman unity and authority. He brought the patriarch Eutychus, who denied the actual resurrection of the body, to an edifying retractation.

After six years of this honourable and laborious exile, he returned to Rome, and regained the peaceful shelter of his monastery of St Andrea, the monks of which elected him abbot soon after his return.[1] He enjoyed there for some time longer the delights of the life which he had chosen. Tenderly cherished by his brethren, he took a paternal share in their trials and spiritual crosses, provided for their temporal and spiritual necessities, and specially rejoiced in the holy death of several among them. He has related the details of these in his *Dialogues*, and seems to breathe in them the perfume of heaven.

Then elected abbot of his monastery. 584.

[1] The chronological order of these first events in the public life of St Gregory has been finally established, in the work of the Mecklemburg pastor, Lau, *Gregor der Grosse, nach seinem Leben und seiner Lehre geschildert*, Leipzig, 1845. The history of the great Pontiff is there written with erudition and as much impartiality as can be looked for from a Protestant minister. Compare *S. Gregorii Vita ex ejus Scriptis Adornata* lib. i. c. 5, in the large edition of his works by the Benedictines.

But the affectionate kindness which always inspired him did not prevent him from maintaining with scrupulous severity the requirements of the rule. He threw into a ditch the body of a monk, who had been a skilful physician, and in whose possession three pieces of gold were found, in contempt of the article of the rule which interdicted all individual property. The three pieces of gold were thrown upon the body, in presence of all the monks, whilst they repeated aloud the words of the verse, "Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem." When this act of justice was accomplished, mercy took its sway once more in the heart of the abbot, who caused mass to be celebrated for thirty days successively to deliver this poor soul from purgatory.[1]

This tender solicitude for souls was on the point of separating him from his dear monastery and from Rome. Everybody knows how he saw exhibited in the market some poor pagan children, of extraordinary beauty and fairness, who were said to be of the country of the Angles, to which he answered, that they were made to become angels.[2] On which occasion, hastening to the Pope, he begged him to send missionaries into that great island of Britain, where the pagans sold such slaves; failing others, offered himself for this work; surprised the pontiff into consent, and prepared instantly for his depart-

[1] *Dial.*, vi. 55.

[2] "Bene Angli quasi angeli, quia angelicos vultus habent et tales in cœlis angelorum decet esse concives."—JOAN. DIAC., i. 21.

ure. But when they understood his intention, the love with which the Romans had formerly regarded him was re-awakened. They surrounded the Pope as he went to St Peter's; they cried to him, "You have offended St Peter; you have ruined Rome in allowing Gregory to leave us." The astonished Pope yielded to the popular voice. He sent messengers after Gregory, who overtook him at three days' journey from Rome; they led him back forcibly to his monastery. It was not as a missionary, but as a pope, that he was to win England to the Church.

He is elected pope. 590.

In 590, Pelagius II. died of the plague, which then depopulated Rome. Gregory was immediately elected pope by the unanimous voice of the senate, the people, and the clergy. It was in vain that he refused, and appealed to the Emperor Maurice not to confirm his election. The Romans intercepted his letter; the imperial confirmation arrived. Then he disguised himself, and, fleeing from Rome to seek some unknown retreat, wandered three days in the woods. He was followed, discovered, and a second time led back to Rome, but this time to reign there. He bowed his head, weeping, under the yoke imposed upon him by the divine will, and the unanimity of his fellow-citizens.[1]

[1] "Infirmitatis meæ conscius secretiora loca petere decreveram. . . . Jugo conditoris subdidi cervicem."—*Epist.*, vii., 4, edit. Benedict. In referring to the epistles, we have almost always followed the order established in the edition of the Benedictines, which differs considerably from the ancient classification, quoted by Mabillon, Fleurs, &c. "Decretum generalitatis evadere nequivit. . . . Capitur, trahitur, consecratur."—JOAN. DIAC., *Vit. Greg.*, i. 41.

It was during the interval between his election and the imperial confirmation that, in the hope of turning back the scourge of the plague, he caused the famous procession of three days, in which, for the first time, all the abbots of the Roman monasteries appeared with their monks, and all the abbesses with their nuns, to be celebrated. Whilst these communities defiled before Gregory, he saw an angel appear upon the summit of the Hadrian Mole, putting back his sword into its sheath, the image of which, standing upon the colossal mausoleum, has given its name to the Castle of St Angelo, and perpetuated to our own day the recollection of St Gregory's vision.[1]

First procession of the religious orders at Rome.

The supreme pontificate, perhaps, never fell upon a soul more disturbed and afflicted than that of the monk who saw himself thus condemned to exchange the peace of the cloister for the cares of the government of the universal Church, and the special defence of the interests of Italy. Not only then, but during all his life, he did not cease to lament his fate. His sadness displayed itself first in his answers to the congratulations which reached him from all quarters: "I have lost," he wrote to the sister of the emperor, "the profound joys of repose. I seem to have been elevated in external things, but in spiritual I have fallen. . . . I endeavour daily to withdraw from the world and

Gregory regrets the peace of his cloistral life.

[1] Compare GREG. TURONENS., *Hist. Franc.*, x. i.; PAUL. DIAC., *De Gest. Longob.*, iii. 25; JOAN DIAC., *Vit. Greg.*, i. 41.

from the flesh, to see heavenly joys in the spirit. . . . . Neither desiring nor fearing anything in this world, I felt myself above everything. But the storm of temptation has cast me all at once among alarms and terrors; for, though still I fear nothing for myself, I fear much for those of whom I have the charge."[1] To the patrician Narses: "I am so overcome with melancholy, that I can scarcely speak; the darkness of grief assails the eyes of my soul; I see nothing that is not sad, and everything which is supposed to please me appears to me lamentable. For I cannot cease to see from what a height of tranquillity I have fallen, and to what a height of embarrassment I have ascended."[2] To Andrew, of the rank called Illustrious: "When you hear of my promotion to the episcopate, weep, if you love me; for there are so many temporal occupations here, that I find myself by this dignity almost separated from the love of God."[3] To the patrician John, who had contributed to his election: "I complain of your love, which has drawn me from the repose which you know I sought. God reward you with eternal gifts for your good intention, but I pray Him deliver me, as He shall please, from so many perils; for, as my sins deserve, I have become bishop, not only of the Romans, but of these Lombards who acknowledge only the right of the sword,

[1] "Alta quietis meæ gaudia perdidi."—*Epist.*, i. 5.
[2] *Epist.*, i. 6.
[3] "Si me diligitis, plangite." —*Epist.*, i. 30.

and whose favour is torture. See how much your patronage has brought me."[1] Then, taking up once more these images which he loved to borrow from maritime life, he said to his intimate friend Leander, bishop of Toledo, whom he had met at Constantinople: "I am here so beaten by the waves of this world, that I despair of being able to guide to port this rotten old vessel with which God has charged me. . . . I must hold the helm amid a thousand difficulties. . . . I already hear the bell of shipwreck ringing. . . . I weep when I recall the peaceful shore which I have left, and sigh in perceiving afar that which I cannot attain."[2]

One day, long after, when, more than ever overwhelmed by the burden of secular affairs, he had withdrawn into a secret place, to give himself up to silence and sadness, he was joined there by the deacon Peter, his pupil, the friend of his youth and companion of his beloved studies. "Has some new trouble happened to you," said the young man, "that you are thus sadder than usual?" "My grief," answered the pontiff, "is that of all my days, always old by custom, and always new by its daily increase.[3]

[1] "Quorum synthicæ spathæ sunt, et gratia pœna. Ecce ubi patrocinia vestra me perduxerunt."—*Epist.*, i. 31.

[2] "Vetustam ac putrescentem navim. . . . Flens reminiscor quod perdidi meæ placidum littus quietis."—*Ibid.*, i. 43.

[3] "Quadam die . . . secretum locum petii amicum mœroris . . . dilectissimus filius meus Petrus . . . mihi a primævo juventutis flore amicitiis familiariter obstrictus. . . . Num quidquam novi. . . . Mœror, Petre, quem quotidie patior, et semper mihi per usum vetus est, et semper per augmentum novus."—*Præfat. ad Dialog.*

My poor soul recalls what it was of old in our monastery, when it soared over everything changeable and transitory; when it dreamt only of heaven; when by contemplation it escaped from the cloister of this body which enclosed it; when it loved death as the entrance of life. And now, because of my pastoral charge, it must bear the burdens of the men of the world, and soil itself in this dust. And when, after having exhausted itself without, it comes back to its internal retreat, it returns with diminished forces. I meditate on all I have suffered and lost. I see myself tossed by the ocean and broken by the tempest. When I think of my former life, I seem to look back towards the shore. And what is still more sad, when thus shaken by the storm, I can scarcely perceive the port which I have left."[1]

These exclamations of profound grief tell us all that we require to know of the influence of this cloistral life, which swayed to such an extent the holy soul of the greatest man of his age.

It is true that the condition of the world and the Church, at the advent of Gregory, exhibited

[1] "Infelix animus meus occupationis suæ pulsatus vulnere meminit qualis aliquando in monasterio fuit, quomodo ei labentia cuncta subter erant. . . . Quod etiam retentus corpore ipsa jam carnis claustra contemplationem transibat, quod mortem quoque, quæ pene cunctis pœna est, videlicet ut ingressum vitæ et laboris præmium amabat. At nunc . . . et post tam pulchram quietis suæ speciem terreni actûs pulvere fœdatur. . . . Ecce etenim nunc magni maris fluctibus quatior, atque in navi multis tempestatis validæ procellis inlidor; et cum prioris vitæ recolo, quasi post tergum reductis oculis viso littore suspiro . . . vix jam portum valeo videre quem reliqui."—*Præfm. ad Dialog.*

State of the world and the Church at the advent of Gregory.

only causes of grief and alarm. An obstinate, although restrained schism, which dated from the fifth general council,[1] and which had lasted forty years, consumed the powers of the clergy. The papacy, always dependant on the Byzantine emperors, and unceasingly humiliated by them, did not even find, in the arm of these distrustful and incapable masters, the support which it needed against its enemies from within and without. Within the shadow of their throne flourished those patriarchs of Constantinople, whose ambition already aspired to the title of universal, and who were to end by rending the Church in twain. Africa was a prey to the Donatists; Spain was entirely Arian; England had fallen back into idolatry; in Gaul, despite the Catholic faith professed by the successors of Clovis, simony polluted the Church, and the struggles of Fredegond and Brunehaut distressed all Christians; in the East, the Avars and Persians threatened or ravaged the empire. But nothing was more lamentable than the state of Italy. As if the scourge of God, floods, plague, and famine, were not enough, men rent each other with contentions, and disorders of all kind invaded the Church, following in the steps of persecution and war. The Lombards, who from being pagans had become Arians, believed that by persecuting furiously the Roman Church they would secure their power against the Greeks; they regarded the pa-

Italy at once abandoned and oppressed by the emperors.

[1] The second of Constantinople, in 553.

pacy as the servant of the Byzantine court, and consequently as their own habitual enemy. The Greek emperors, on their side, accused the popes of treason, because they did not sacrifice everything to the necessities of imperial policy, or of usurpation, because they took upon themselves the task of providing for the public necessities when the inaction or powerlessness of the lieutenants of Cæsar became too evident. In reality, the successors of Constantine, with an instinctive perception of the future, perceived already, in the successors of St Peter, the power which God had destined to replace their decrepid sovereignty, in Italy and over that city in which the imagination of Christendom still placed the centre of the empire and the cause of its existence. Thence came their tortuous, oppressive, and inconsistent policy. They would be obeyed as masters, by nations whom they knew not how to defend; and as, amid the ruins which despotism had everywhere accumulated, the papacy alone was seen standing, they willingly made the popes responsible for the consequences of their own weakness.

The poor monk who showed so much despair when he was thrown into that whirlpool by the unanimous voice of the Romans, could yet perceive with a bold and clear glance the dangers of the situation, and adopt a line of conduct which was a manifest realisation of the infallible promises of Jesus Christ. He founded the temporal greatness of the Holy See, and the progress of its spiritual

authority, upon the basis, long immovable, of the gratitude and admiration of nations.

Connection between Gregory and the Lombards.

First of all, and especially, he concerned himself with the Lombards. Although he has perhaps judged too severely in his writings this proud and intelligent race, whose courage and legislative powers have attracted the attention of posterity, and who were a hundred times more worthy than the degenerate Greco-Romans, whose authority he loyally endeavoured to re-establish in Italy, Gregory used in his intercourse with them no means that were not legitimate and honourable. He had a right, after long and laborious negotiations with them, to bear this testimony to himself, "Had I been willing to lend myself to the destruction of the Lombards, that nation would have had to-day neither kings, dukes, nor counts, and would have been a prey to irremediable confusion; but because I fear God I would not assist in the ruin of any."[1] He doubtless alluded to the treacheries planned by the exarchs of Ravenna, who were the emperor's viceroys in Italy, by which they attempted to make up for their military inferiority before the Lombards. The Roman exarch was, by his animosity and cowardice, one of the principal afflictions of Gregory's life. After having broken the peace with the Lombards, and thus justified the renewed hostilities of their dukes Ariulf[2] and Arigis[3] in Central and

[1] *Epist.*, iv. 47, 5.—He wrote this in 598.
[2] Duke of Spoleto. [3] Duke of Benevento.

Southern Italy, he abandoned Rome and Naples without defence, and notwithstanding interdicted the pope from treating with the invaders. It was then that Gregory displayed all the resolution of a valiant captain, with all the authority of a sovereign. He did not content himself with complaining bitterly to the Emperor Maurice of the desertion of Italy, and that, in order to guard Perugia, Rome had been left defenceless. "I was obliged," he wrote to him, "to see with my own eyes the Romans led into France with ropes round their necks like dogs, to be sold in the market."[1] But he himself provided what was most urgent, wrote to the military leaders to encourage them in resistance, pointed out to the soldiers assembled at Naples the leader whom they should follow, fed the people, paid the troops their wages and the Barbarians their contributions of war, all at the expense of the ecclesiastical treasury. "The emperor," he wrote to the empress, "has a treasurer for his troops at Ravenna, but as for me, I am the treasurer of the Lombards at Rome."[2]

At a later period, the king of the Lombards, Agilulf, disgusted by the renewed treachery of the imperial exarch, laid siege to Rome itself. Gregory, who was, above everything else, a bishop, and watched over the spiritual interests of the Romans

[1] "Quod oculis meis cernerem Romanos more canum in collis funibus ligatos. . . . Qui ad Franciam ducebantur venales."—*Epist.*, v. 40.

[2] *Epist.*, v. 21.

with still more care than he exerted for their material defence, was then expounding the prophet Ezekiel in his sermons. He interrupted his discourses more than once to breathe out his grief, and to deplore the misfortunes of the eternal city. "Two things specially trouble me," he said, when he was asked at least to explain the last chapters of the prophet upon the re-establishment of the temple: "the obscurity of the text, and the news that King Agilulf has passed the Po on his way to besiege us. Judge, my brethren, how a poor soul, thus troubled and distracted, can penetrate into such mysteries."[1] And again, "What does the world contain which can please us? . . . We see nothing but sadness, we hear only groans. . . . Rome, once mistress of the world, how do we see her fallen! Where is the senate? where is the people? But why speak I of men? The very buildings are destroyed and the walls crumble down. . . . Once her princes and chiefs spread themselves over all the earth to possess it. The sons of worldly men hastened hither to advance themselves in the world. Now that she is deserted and ruined, no man comes here to seek his fortune: there is no power remaining to oppress the poor." After a time he announced that he should stop his preaching: "Let no one blame me if I put an end to this discourse. You all perceive how our tribulations increase. The sword and death are everywhere. Some return

[1] *Homil.* 18.

to us with their hands cut off, with the news that others are taken or killed. I must be silent, because my soul is weary of life."[1]

Agilulf, however, for some unknown reason, did not succeed in taking Rome. All the surrounding country was once more devastated, and the incurable desolation and unwholesome barrenness of the Roman Campagna dates from this period; but the city was spared. Gregory could verify the prophecy of St Benedict, who had predicted that Rome, condemned to the most cruel trials, should sink back upon herself, but should not be destroyed.[2] He could still continue to watch over these crumbling walls, these overthrown palaces, these buildings worn out with extreme old age.[3] But, as a reward for his generous and useful efforts, he received only new denunciations from the exarch, and a reprimand from the emperor, who reproached him in insulting terms with his simplicity. "I understand," the pope replied to him, "what the language of your serene missives means: you find that I have acted like a fool, and you are right. If I had not acted like a fool I should not have borne all that I have borne for you among the swords of the Lombards."[4]

[1] "Undique gladiis, . . . undique mortis periculum. . . . Alii detruncatis manibus. . . . Tædet animam meam vitæ meæ."—*Homil. ult. in Ezechiel.*

[2] "Roma a gentilibus non exterminabitur, sed . . . in semetipsa marcescet."—*Dial.*, ii. 15.

[3] "Dissoluta mœnia, eversas domos, . . . ædificia longo senio lassata."—*Ibid.*

[4] "In serenissimis jussionibus dominorum pietas . . . urbanæ sim-

His mediation between Byzantium and the Lombards. 544.

He succeeded at last, after nine years' exertions, in overcoming the Byzantine repugnance to acknowledge any right whatever on the side of the Lombards, and concluded a peace between the two powers which made Italy, exhausted by thirty years of war and brigandage, thrill with joy. It was of short duration; but when hostilities recommenced, he entered into direct negotiation with King Agilulf, and obtained from that prince a special truce for Rome and its surrounding territory. He had besides found a powerful advocate with the Lombard king in the person of the illustrious Queen Theodelinda, who was the Clotilde of these last conquerors of Italy. This princess, a Bavarian and Catholic by birth, the widow of King Autharis by her first marriage, had so gained the heart of the Lombards, that they conferred upon her the right of designating his successor by marrying whomsoever she thought most worthy of reigning with her. In this way she had given her hand and crown to Duke Agilulf, in the same year as that in which Gregory ascended the Holy See. These two noble hearts soon understood each other. The queen was always the faithful friend of the pope; she served as a medium of communication between him and her husband. It is not certain whether

Agilulf and Theodelinda.

plicitatis vocabulo me fatuum appellat. . . . Simplex denuncior: constat procul dubio quia fatuus appellor . . . quod ita esse ego quoque confiteor."—*Epist.*, v. 40.

she succeeded in converting the latter,[1] but her gentle influence led the entire Lombard nation, little by little, from Arianism to the Catholic faith. Gregory, from the very beginning of his pontificate, had exhorted the Italian bishops to make special exertions for the conversion of these formidable enemies of orthodoxy.[2] It is believed that the queen was powerfully aided in this work by the *Dialogues* which Gregory had compiled from the narratives of the first disciples and successors of St Benedict, and in which he related the life of that patriarch of the monastic order, and the marvels of fervour and penitence exhibited by the monks who were imbued with his spirit. This work was dedicated to the Lombard queen, as if to enable her to show to the devastators of Italy proofs of the sanctity and moral greatness with which the orthodox faith alone could endow the vanquished.

Conversion of the Lombards.

It was thus that Gregory snatched Rome from the yoke of conquest. He not only preserved her from the Lombards, but sheltered her from the violence of all the petty tyrants of the neighbourhood, who rose amidst the universal confusion. But his soul was consumed, says one of his historians, by the fire of perpetual alarms concerning the fate of his children, and that con-

[1] St Columba, in a letter written in 607, speaks of him as still an Arian.

[2] *Epist.*, i. 29.

secrated soil which he regarded as their inheritance.[1] We can understand now how the patriotism of popes, such as Gregory, created their temporal power, and how, "sole guardians of Rome, they remained its masters."[2]

His political and religious struggles with the emperors.

However, he required still more constancy and courage to contend with the Greeks, with that Eastern Empire which was represented by functionaries whose odious exactions had quite as great a share in the despair of the people as the ravages of the Barbarians, and whose malice was more dreadful, as he wrote, than the sword of the Lombards: "They can only kill our bodies, while the imperial judges devour our souls by their rapine and fraud."[3] Elsewhere he denounces to the empress the officers who, in Sardinia, sold to the pagans for money the permission to sacrifice to their idols, and continued to collect that impost from those who had been baptised, and who, in Corsica, overwhelmed the inhabitants with such burdens that they were reduced to selling their children and fleeing to seek refuge among the Lombards.[4] It was the same in Sicily, and the revenues provided by their extortions were to be employed in the defence of Italy.

[1] "Urebant incessanter ejus animum filiorum hinc inde discrimina nuntiata."—PAUL. DIAC., c. 13.

[2] OZANAM, *Unpublished Fragment on S. Gregory.*

[3] "Ejus in nos malitia gladios Longobardorum vicit, ita ut benigniores videantur hostes, quia nos interimunt, quam Reipublicæ judices, qui nos . . . rapinis atque fallaciis in cogitatione consumunt."—*Epist.*, v. 42.

[4] *Ibid.*, v. 41.

But, said Gregory to the empress, "it might be suggested to the emperor that it would be better to give up some expenses in Italy, in order to dry the tears of the oppressed in Sicily.[1] I say this briefly, and only that the supreme Judge may not impute my silence to me as a crime."

Which lasted during his whole life.

The entire life of Gregory was then a struggle with the Byzantine spirit, with the patriarch of Constantinople, who aimed at supplanting the Roman pontiff, as well as with the emperor, who would have dominated Italy without defending her, and ruled the Church as if she had been only a province of his empire. God had sent him, before his pontificate, to Constantinople, that he might the better understand that field of battle[2] in which he won for the Church more than one difficult victory.

Conflict with the Patriarch of Constantinople on the title of *Universal*.

Among so many conflicts—through which Gregory always maintained the rights and dignities of the Holy See, conciliating, at the same time, with extraordinary precautions, the arrogance of the Byzantine court—we shall dwell only on that one which arose between him and the patriarch of Constantinople, John, surnamed the Faster. Relying on the support of most of the Eastern bishops, faithful to the proud pretensions which for two centuries past had been entertained by the bishops of the imperial residence, and preluding thus the dis-

[1] "Sed ego suggero ad hoc, ut, etsi minus expensæ in Italia tribuantur, a suo tamen imperio oppressorum lacrymas compescat."—*Epist.*, v. 41.

[2] Dom Pitra., *Hist. de S. Léger*, Introduction.

astrous ambition of his successors, this monk, who had begun by a pretence of refusing the episcopate, took in his acts the title of œcumenical or universal patriarch. Gregory stood up with as much vigour as authority against this strange pretension. He did not draw back before the emperor, who openly sided with the bishop of his new capital, and, although deserted in the struggle by the two other patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, who would have been equally wounded by the usurpation of him of Constantinople, Gregory persevered, during all his pontificate,[1] in his resistance to that wretched assumption, in which he perceived less an attempt upon the unity and authority of the universal Church, than an excess of pride on one side and adulation on the other, which disgusted his humble and generous soul.[2]

"What!" he wrote to the emperor, "St Peter, who received the keys of heaven and earth, the power of binding and loosing, the charge and primacy of the whole Church, was never called universal apostle; and yet my pious brother John

[1] The contest was renewed under Phocas. Neither the emperor nor the patriarch would yield. If Gregory did not obtain the victory, he at least paved the way for that of his successor Boniface III., under whom the emperor Phocas forbade the patriarch the use of the contested title; but during the following reign, under Heraclius, it was resumed by the patriarch Sergius. In return, the popes then resumed the right to confirm the patriarchs of Constantinople—a right from which the latter had been emancipated for a century, and which Photius did not succeed in overthrowing until three centuries later.—BARONIUS., *Annal.*, ad 606. LAU. p. 165.

[2] "Quousque pestem universalis nominis ab ipsis etiam subdolis adulatorum labiis penitus abstulisset."—JOAN. DIAC., *Vit.*, iii. c. 59.

would name himself universal bishop. I must needs exclaim, O tempora! O mores! All Europe is in the power of the Barbarians. The cities are overthrown, the castles are in ruins, the provinces are depopulated, the soil has no longer hands to cultivate it; idolaters pursue the faithful even to death. And priests who should prostrate themselves in the courts of the temple in dust and ashes, seek after titles of vanity!" He took care to explain to the emperor that he did not defend his own cause, but that of the whole Church, which was scandalised by such an unheard-of pretension. He reminded him that Nestorius and Macedonius, both bishops of Constantinople, had both been heretics and heresiarchs. He added: "For me, I am the servant of all the priests as long as they live in a manner becoming the priesthood: but if any one raises his head against God and against the laws of our fathers, I am confident that he shall not make me bow mine, even with the sword."[1]

Gregory was so much the more bold in combating the dangerous vanity of the Byzantine patriarch, that he himself had displayed on all occasions a sincere and practical humility. His vast correspondence and all the acts of his life furnish a thou-

[1] "Et vir sanctissimus consacerdos meus Joannes. . . . Exclamare compellor ac dicere: O tempora! O mores! Ecce cuncta in Europæ partibus. . . . Et tamen sacerdotes qui in pavimento et cinere flentes jacere debuerunt. . . . Numquid ego hac in re . . . propriam causam defendo. . . . Ego cunctorum sacerdotum servus sum. . . . Nam qui contra Dominum . . . suam cervicem erigit, . . . confido quia meam sibi nec cum gladiis flectet."—*Epist.*, v. 20.

sand touching proofs of it. He had impressed the seal of this humility upon the papacy itself, by adopting, first of all the popes, in the preamble of his official documents, the fine title of *Servant of the servants of God*, which has become the distinctive title of his successors. He had expressly refused the same name of *universal bishop* or *pope*, which had been given him by the patriarch of Alexandria. His magnanimous humility displays itself fully in these noble words of his letter to this patriarch. "I desire to increase in virtue and not in words. I do not consider myself honoured in that which dishonours my brethren. It is the honour of the universal Church which honours me. It is the strength and greatness of my brethren in the episcopate which does me honour. I feel myself truly honoured only when I see that no man refuses to another the honour due to him. Away with those words which inflate vanity and wound charity! . . . The holy Council of Chalcedon and other Fathers have offered this title to my predecessors, but none of them has ever used it, that they might guard their own honour in the sight of God, by seeking here below the honour of all the priesthood."[1]

Noble humility of Gregory, *servant of the servants of God.*

This weighty difference, another of which we

[1] "Ego non verbis quæro prosperari, sed moribus; nec honorem meum esse deputo in quo fratres meos honorem suum perdere cognosco. *Meus namque honor est honor universalis Ecclesiæ.* Meus honor est fratrum meorum solidus vigor. Tum ergo vere honoratus sum, cum singulis quibusque honor debitus non negatur. . . . Recedant verba quæ vanitatem inflant, caritatem vulnerant."—*Epist.*, viii. c. 30.

shall speak regarding the prohibition addressed to soldiers to their becoming monks, and especially that which arose between the pope and the emperor touching the irregular election of the metropolitan of Salona, contributed to render almost permanent the misunderstanding between them. That Eastern world which was so soon to become the prey of Islam, was obstinate in ignoring its best chance of salvation, in alienating the nations and Churches of the West, and in weakening by a minute and vexatious despotism the Christian life which had blossomed with so much promise in its bosom. Gregory had to exercise an incessant vigilance, to prevent the immense army of lay officials, from the emperor down to the meanest agent of the treasury, from encroaching upon the rights and liberties of the Church, and especially from relaxing or attempting to break the ties of subordination which connected individual churches with the Holy See. And he had also to reconcile this permanent and universal resistance with the submission which he professed and practised, to the best of his power, towards the empire in temporal affairs. In claiming for the Church an almost absolute liberty and sovereignty in spiritual matters, he did not hesitate to declare himself the humble subject of Cæsar. From thence came that singular medley of immovable resolution and humble protestations which appears in his correspondence with the Cæsars. However, though he always spoke and often acted as a docile subject of the

Struggles with the Emperor Maurice.

successors of Augustus and Constantine, they were not slow to understand that they had something else to deal with in this bishop, who was at once the direct successor of Peter, the patriarch of the entire West, and the greatest proprietor in Italy, and who had already occupied the place of mediator between the Barbarians and the Empire.

Protest against the edict relating to monks who had been soldiers.

We find this mixture of extreme humility and energetic resistance in another struggle, which the constant and natural concern of Gregory for the rights and interests of monastic life had led him into, in the beginning of his pontificate. The Emperor Maurice had published an edict which interdicted public functionaries and soldiers from entering either into the ranks of the clergy or into a monastery. Gregory approved the first clause of this law, which interdicted public functionaries from holding ecclesiastical offices: "for," said he, "these people prefer rather to change their occupation, than to leave the world."[1] But, always a monk in his heart, he protested against the measure relative to monastic life, in a letter celebrated for its eloquence and ability, and which must not be omitted here. He begins by declaring that he speaks not as pope, but as an individual, the obliged friend of the emperor, which explains the humble character of certain passages; but he soon rises to all the loftiness of spiritual power and the freedom of souls.

"The man who fails to be sincere in what he says

[1] "Mutare sæculum, non relinquere."—*Epist.*, iii. 65.

Celebrated letter to Maurice.

or does to the serene emperors[1] is responsible towards God. For myself, the unworthy servant of your piety, I speak neither as bishop nor as subject, but by the right which I find in my heart.[2] For, serene lord, you were my master before you became master of all. . . . I confess to *my masters* that this law has filled me with terror, for it closes the way of heaven to many. . . . There are many who can lead a Christian life in the world. But there are also many who cannot be saved, but by forsaking all things. . . .

"And who am I but dust and a worm of the earth, who venture to speak thus to my masters?[3] However, when I see this law interfere with God, the master of the world, I cannot keep silence. For this power over the human race has been bestowed from on high upon my masters, that they might help those who would do well to open up the way to heaven, and make the earthly kingdom serve the heavenly. Yet here it is forbidden to him who has once been enrolled in the terrestrial army to enter, unless when an invalid or in retirement, into the service of our Lord. . . . It is thus that Christ answers by me, the last of his servants and yours: 'I have made thee, from a secretary, count of the guards; from count, Cæsar; from Cæsar, emperor;

[1] He speaks in the plural, because Maurice had associated his son Theodosius in the imperial power in 591.

[2] "Neque ut episcopus, neque ut servus jure reipublicæ, sed jure privato loquor."

[3] "Ego autem hæc dominis meis loquens, quid sum, nisi pulvis et vermis?"

if that was not enough, I have made thee also father of an emperor. I have put my priests under thy power, and thou withdrawest thy soldiers from my service!'[1] Sire, say to your servant what you can answer to Him who, at the day of judgment, shall speak to you thus.[2]

"Perhaps it is supposed that none of these men are truly converted; but I, your unworthy servant, have known many soldiers converted in my lifetime, who have, in the monasteries, given an example of every virtue, and even worked miracles. Yet this law interdicts every similar conversion. Inquire, I beseech you, what emperor it was who made a similar law, and see whether it becomes you to imitate him.[3] And consider besides that men would be prevented from leaving the world at a time when the end of the world approaches. For the time is not distant when, amidst the burning of heaven and earth, in the universal conflagration of the elements, surrounded by angels and archangels, thrones, dominions, and powers, the terrible Judge shall appear. When he would pardon all your sins, if he did not find this single law directed against himself, what, I pray you, will be your excuse? I conjure you by that terrible judge, not to make your tears, your fasts, your many prayers,

[1] "Ego te de notario comitem excubitorum. . . . Sacerdotes meos tuæ manui commisi."

[2] "Responde, rogo, piissime domine, servo tuo, quid venienti e hæc dicenti responsurus es?"

[3] He says in a subsequent letter that this was Julian the Apostate.

useless before God, but to soften or abrogate this law, for the army of my masters shall increase so much the more against the army of the enemy, as the army of God shall increase in prayer.

"In submission, however, to your command, I have forwarded this same law into the different provinces, and because it is not in accordance with the will of God Almighty, I warn you of it by this supplication. I have thus fulfilled my duty on both sides—have rendered obedience to the emperor, and have not been silent concerning that which seemed to me in opposition to God." [1]

Modest and humble as this letter was, he did not venture to send it to the emperor by his resident representative, but confided it to one of Maurice's physicians, who was a private friend of his own, that it might be presented privately, and at a favourable moment. The immediate effect of this protest is not known, but it was listened to, for a subsequent letter of the pope to the metropolitans of Italy and Illyria enjoins them not to receive soldiers into monasteries till after a three years' novitiate, and adds, that the emperor consented to these conditions.[2]

These perpetual contests with the Byzantine court may explain, without excusing, the conduct of Gregory at the death of the Emperor Maurice. This prince, infected, like all his predecessors, with a mania for interfering in ecclesiastical affairs, and

[1] *Epist.*, iii. 65. [2] *Ibid.*, viii. 5.

interfering with all the weight of absolute power, was very superior to most of them. Gregory himself has more than once done justice to his faith and piety, to his zeal for the Church and respect for her canons.[1] He acknowledged that in his reign no heretic dared open his mouth.[2] Almost the only thing with which the emperor could be reproached, was his avarice. After twenty years of an undistinguished reign, he unfortunately abandoned twelve thousand captives of his army to the sword of the Avars, who massacred the whole on his refusal to ransom them. From this circumstance arose a military revolt, which placed Phocas upon the throne. This wretch not only murdered the Emperor Maurice, gouty, and incapable of defending himself, but also his six sons, whom he caused to be put to death under the eyes of their father, without even sparing the youngest, who was still at the breast, and whom his nurse would have saved by putting her own child in his place; but Maurice, who would not have his child preserved at such a cost, disclosed that pious deception to the murderers. He died like a Christian hero, repeating the words of the psalm, "Thou are just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right." He had before entreated God to expiate his sins by a violent death in this world, that he might be spared from suffering in the other. This massacre did not satisfy Phocas, who sacrificed the empress and her three daughters, the

The Emperor Maurice assassinated, and replaced by Phocas.

23d November 602.

[1] *Epist.*, v. 43, and xi. 25. [2] *Ibid.*, x. 46.

brother of Maurice, and a multitude of others in his train. The monster then sent his own image and that of his wife to Rome, where the senate and people received them with acclamation.

Strange adulations and lamentable weakness of Gregory towards Phocas.

Gregory unfortunately joined in these mean acclamations. He carried these images of his new masters, bathed in innocent blood, into the oratory of the Lateran palace.[1] Afterwards he addressed extraordinary congratulations to Phocas, not in the surprise of the first moment, but seven months after the crime.[2] "God," said he, "the sovereign arbiter of the life of man, sometimes raises up one to punish the crimes of many, as we have experienced in our long affliction; and sometimes to console the afflicted hearts of many, he raises another whose mercy fills them with joy, as we hope from your piety. Therefore we feel strengthened by the abundance of our joy, congratulating ourselves that your goodness has attained the imperial dignity. Let heaven and earth rejoice with us!"[3] He also wrote to the new empress: "No tongue can express, nor mind conceive, the gratitude which we owe to God, that your Serenity has attained the empire, and that we are delivered from the hard burden we have so long endured, and to which has succeeded a gentle yoke

[1] JOAN. DIAC., iv. 20.

[2] *Epist.*, xiii. 31. Data mense Junii, indictione vi.

[3] "De qua exultationis abundantia roborari nos citius credimus, qui benignitatem vestræ pietatis ad imperiale fastigium pervenisse gaudemus. Lætentur cœli et exultet terra," &c.—*Ibid.*

which we can bear. Let choirs of angels and voices of men unite with us to thank the Creator!"[1] It is true, that in this same letter to Phocas, and in a subsequent one, he points out to him the duties of his charge, exhorts him to amend the errors of past reigns, and supplicates him so to rule, that under him all may enjoy their possessions and his freedom in peace. "For," says he, "there is this difference between the barbarous kings and the emperors of the republic, that the former rule over slaves, and the latter over free men."[2] This was precisely the reverse of the truth: it was, besides, a melancholy and guilty homage rendered to a man who was to become one of the most odious tyrants of his age, and who had gained the empire by a crime without parallel even in the annals of that infamous history.

This is the only stain upon the life of Gregory. We do not attempt either to conceal or excuse it. It can scarcely be explained by recalling all the vexations he had suffered from Maurice and his agents, annoyances of which he always complained energetically, though he did not fail to do justice to the undeniable piety of the old emperor,[3] who, like

[1] "Quæ lingua loqui, quis animus cogitare sufficit quantas de serenitate vestri imperii omnipotenti Deo gratias debemus. . . . Reddatur ergo Creatori ab hymnodicis angelorum choris gloria in cœlo."—*Epist.*, xiii. 39.

[2] "Reformetur jam singulis sub jugo imperii pii libertas sua. Hoc namque inter reges gentium et imperatores reipublicæ distat, quod reges gentium domini servorum sunt, imperatores vero reipublicæ domini liberorum."—*Epist.*, xiii. 31.

[3] Compare *Epist.* v. 43, to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, and xi. 25, to Maximus of Salona, where he says expressly of Maurice,

all his predecessors, imagined himself entitled to judge and direct the affairs of the Church, but was in no respect a persecutor. Perhaps, too, Gregory adopted this means to secure the help which he implored from Phocas against the new incursions of the Lombards,[1] or to mollify beforehand the already threatening intentions of the tyrant.[2] We have seen that he mingled advice and indirect lessons with his congratulations. It must also be remembered that these flatteries, which we find so repugnant from the pen of our holy and great pope, were in some sort the official language of those times; they resulted from the general debasement of public manners, and from the tone of the language invariably used then at each change of reign. His motives were undoubtedly pure. Notwithstanding, a stain remains upon his memory, and a shadow upon the history of the Church, which is so consoling and full of light in this age of storms and darkness. But among the greatest and holiest of mortals, virtue, like human wisdom, always falls short in some respect.

Gregory, who died sixteen months after the advent of Phocas, had no time either to expiate or repair that weakness. No doubt he would have done it, if occasion had been given him.

"Omnibus notum est piissimos dominos disciplinam servare, et in causis sacerdotalibus non miscere."

[1] Compare *Epist.*, xiii. 38.

[2] "His laudibus novos principes demulcebat, . . . quia non eos ad tyrannidem venturos esse putabat."—JOAN. DIAC., iv. 23.

Contrast of his courage and habitual rectitude with this language.

His life demonstrated nothing more clearly than his boldness in presence of danger, and his immovable perseverance in the pursuit of right and truth, whenever he perceived them. All his career justifies the noble words which he wrote to his *apocrisarius* or nuncio at Constantinople: "You ought to know how I feel, I who have resolved to die rather than see the chair of St. Peter degenerate in my lifetime. You know my disposition; I bear long, but when I have once resolved to endure no longer, I face all dangers with joy."[1] Save in the deplorable instance which we have pointed out, he always showed himself faithful to the instructions which he gave to an Illyrian bishop who lamented over the iniquity of the imperial judges: "Your duty is to resist for the cause of the poor and oppressed. If you do not succeed, God will remember the intention; seek above all things to gain Him who reads hearts. As for human terrors and favours, they are but a smoke which vanishes before the lightest breath. Be assured that it is impossible to please God and the wicked at the same time; consider yourself most agreeable to God when you perceive yourself odious to perverse men. However, even in defending the poor, be grave and moderate."[2]

[1] "Mores meos bene cognitos habes, quia diu porto. Sed, si semel deliberavero non portare, contra pericula lætus vado."—*Epist.*, iv. 47. The point in question was the affair of Maximus of Salona: the letter is addressed to Sabinian, who was afterwards his successor.

[2] "Fraternitas tua opponere se pro pauperibus, pro oppressis debet.

But to perceive in all their purity the greatness of his soul and the influence of his genius upon the doctrines of the Church, it is necessary to turn from that Lower Empire which was condemned to irremediable decay, and where the seeds of schism budded in the bosom of abject servitude. Life and honour were elsewhere. Gregory was aware of it.

Gregory turns towards the new races.

He did not content himself with the imposing position of defender of Rome, protector of Italy, and mediator between the Greeks and Lombards. He did more. In turning towards the Germanic nations, he showed the way by which the Roman Church, and with her the mind and future fate of the West, could be emancipated from the dishonouring yoke of Byzantium.

The Roman empire existed no longer in its first form. That climax of disgrace had come to an end. The civilised world was escaping from that absolute dominion exercised by monsters or adventurers, which has been admired in our own days by some base souls worthy of having lived under Caracalla or Arcadius. The human race had at last perceived its own shame. The yoke of a free nation, however cruel and iniquitous, may be borne without blushing; but to obey a nation itself enslaved by the most repellent despotism, is

In omni quod agis inspectorem cordis appete habere placatum. . . . Nam humani terrores et gratia fumo sunt similes, qui leni aura raptus evanescit. Hoc certissime scito quod placere Deo sine pravis hominibus displicere nullus potest. . . . Ipsa tamen defensio pauperum moderata et gravis sit."—*Epist.*, x. 35.

to ask too much of human baseness. The whole world was then in insurrection against Rome, and the insurrection had everywhere triumphed.

It was necessary that the victorious Barbarians, and those countries which had been revivified by the rude experience of conquest, should be kept from identifying in a common reprobation the odious phantom of old imperial Rome, and that young Church, the sovereign see of which God, by a secret miracle of his providence, had established in the very centre of the empire which had persecuted her so cruelly, which she had in vain attempted to regenerate after having converted it, but which she was shortly to eclipse and replace in the world. It was necessary to keep Constantinople from imagining itself the heir of Rome, and planting its degrading and egotistical dominion beside the protecting, and up to this time irreproachable, authority of the popes. The Franks, the Visigoths, the Lombards, and the Anglo-Saxons, entered on the scene; they inaugurated the destiny of races which, after the course of thirteen centuries, are still at the head of humanity; they would willingly bow their youthful and unsubdued force before the pure and new-born majesty of the Church, but not before the decrepid servitude of the Byzantine empire.

Gregory was the man predestined to the salutary and decisive work of transition. The spiritual and temporal independence of the West manifested

itself in him. He was the first pope who paid special attention to the Western races, and associated himself, by directing it, with the progress of the German conquerors. He was their friend, their educator, and their master. To assimilate them to the Church, to adapt her to their instincts and reason, without compromising the traditional element and sovereign authority, the immovable centre of which was to remain standing in the midst of desolated Rome, nothing less would suffice than the tender and patient genius of Gregory and his successors.

He makes use of the Germanic nations for the emancipation of the Church and the West from the Byzantine yoke.

Long crushed between the Lombards and Byzantines, between the unsoftened ferocity of the Barbarians and the vexatious decrepitude of despotism, Gregory, with that instinctive perception of future events which God sometimes grants to pure souls, sought elsewhere a support for the Roman Church. His eyes were directed to the new races, who were scarcely less ferocious than the Lombards, but who did not, like them, weigh upon Italy and Rome, and who already exhibited elements of strength and continuance.

The West separated itself more and more from the East.[1] The patriarch of Constantinople, despite the proud titles with which he concealed his servitude, gradually fell into the first rank of the imperial household. The patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, were about to be swept

[1] LAU., *op. cit.*, pp. 179 and 189.

away by Islamism. Rome alone remained standing, incessantly insulted, but not yet enslaved. Africa and Illyria, which were still attached to the patriarchate of the West, of which Rome was the see, were soon to fall, one under the sword of the Arabs, the other to identify itself with the domains of the Cæsar of Constantinople. But the great churches of the new northern kingdom could make up, and more than make up, for that loss.

The rupture of all political ties between the Roman empire and Gaul, Spain, and Britain, had naturally loosened the links which attached the Churches of these countries to Rome. To renew these links, and to preserve the Church from sinking under the feudal institutions which were to prevail in the new order of social affairs, the best thing that could be done was to form alliances with the Germanic races which had replaced Roman dominion. Gregory took that glorious and salutary initiative. We shall see further on what he did for Spain and Great Britain. Let us first exhibit his choice of Gaul, the Church and kingdom of the Franks, to become the nucleus of the great Germanic Christendom. He thus attached to himself the only nation among the Barbarians which, while Arianism prevailed everywhere, remained orthodox. He founded the alliance which, two centuries after, finally freed the Holy See from every foreign yoke, from Byzantine dominion, as well as from the violence of the Lombards.

His relations with the Franks.

It does not appear that he called the Franks to the help of Italy against the Lombards, like his predecessor, Pelagius II.; they had come already, and three Frank invasions[1] had produced only an increase of calamity to the inhabitants of the northern part of the peninsula. He took another way, and entered, in the first place, into the closest relations with the Church of Gaul, on account of lands which the Roman Church possessed in Provence, and which had been long deserted, like all the other vast territories which already constituted the patrimony of St Peter. A holy monk of the isle of Lerins, Virgilius, was then bishop of Arles, and metropolitan of Provence. Gregory gave him the pallium, without prejudice to the rights of the metropolitan, and made him his vicar in the domains of King Childebert, enjoining him specially to devote himself to the work of rooting out the radical vices of the Gallo-Frank Church, which were simony, and the election of laymen to bishoprics.[2] He took occasion from this to address himself directly to the young king, Childebert II., who reigned in Burgundy and Austrasia, and to his mother Brunehaut, as much to recommend Virgilius to their support in the execution of the apostolical decrees, as to ask their protection for the priest Candidus, whom he had charged with the administration of the pontifical possessions in Gaul. It is in one of these letters to

The monk Virgilius at Arles.

June 595.

Letters of Gregory to Childebert and Brunehaut.

[1] In 580, 589, and 590.

[2] *Epist.*, iv. 50.

Brunehaut that we find, on the subject of the education which she had given to her descendants, and other virtues supposed to belong to her, those emphatic compliments with which he has been so often reproached, and which agree so little with all that we know of the life of that too notorious princess. But it cannot be denied, that along with these praises, borrowed from the adulatory style of the Byzantine court, the forms of which he had too much accustomed himself to imitate, Gregory addressed to the young king Childebert the noblest language which had ever been addressed by a pontiff to a king. He began, in the words which follow, to make audible that great papal voice which, for a thousand years, was to be the supreme organ of justice and humanity to princes and nations:—

"As much as the royal dignity is above common men, your throne elevates you above the other thrones of nations. It is a small thing to be a king when others are so, but it is a great thing to be a Catholic, when others do not share the same honour. As a great lamp shines with all the brilliancy of its light in the deepest darkness of night, so the splendour of your faith shines amid the voluntary obscurity of other nations. . . . In order, then, to surpass other men in works as well as in faith, let not your Excellency cease to show yourself merciful to your subjects. If there are things which offend you, punish none without discussion. You shall please the King of kings best when, re-

straining your authority, you believe yourself to have less privilege than power."[1]

Continued intercourse between Gregory and Brunehaut.

After the premature death of Childebert II. in 596, and during the minority of his heirs, Brunehaut, who was regent of his two kingdoms, the east and south-east of Gaul, continued an increasingly close and frequent intercourse with Gregory. She asked the pallium for the Bishop of Autun, and he accorded that envied distinction to the Burgundian prelate, only while insisting anew upon the necessity of extirpating simony, destroying the remnants of idolatry, which still mingled with the Christianity of the Franks and Burgondes, reforming the scandalous life of some priests who lived with women, and, lastly, putting an end to that invasion of unprepared laymen into the priesthood, and even into the episcopate, which he energetically called the *heresy of neophytes*.[2]

He sent to her, in the quality of legate, and in order to hold a council for the cure of these irregularities, Cyriac, the abbot of his own monastery of St Andrea at Rome. This council was never assembled; but Brunehaut, and her grandson Thierry, king of Burgundy, sent an embassy to Gregory in 602, to negotiate, by his mediation, a

[1] "Si qua sunt quæ ejus animum offendere valeant, ea indiscussa non sinat. Tunc enim vere Regi regum . . . amplius placebit, si, potestatem suam restringens, minus sibi crediderit licere quam potest."—*Epist.*, vi. 6. Do not these words anticipate the fine maxim of our old jurisconsult Bodin, "Universal power does not give universal right"?

[2] *Epist.*, vii. 5. Compare x. 33, xi. 63, 69.

treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Byzantine emperor, against the Avars, who threatened the empire and the Frank kingdoms equally. The political and social part played by the Papacy developed itself thus gradually and naturally under the pontificate of the first monk who had occupied the chair of St Peter. The murder of Maurice, it is true, prevented the success of this negotiation; but the Burgundian ambassador was charged, besides, to obtain from the pope the confirmation of two monasteries and an hospital, which Brunehaut had founded at Autun.[1]

Charter of Autun, which proclaims the temporal supremacy of the Papacy over the Crown.

It was then, and at the express request of the Frankish crown, that Gregory issued that famous charter, in which, for the first time, the direct subordination of temporal power to spiritual is clearly set forth and recognised. The inviolability of persons and property, and the electoral freedom of the three new monastic communities of Autun, were placed under the safeguard of papal authority, and of a penalty which is thus declared: "If any *king*, bishop, judge, or other secular person, knowing this constitution, shall venture to infringe it, let him be deprived of the *dignity of his power and honour*, and let him know that he has rendered himself guilty before the tribunal of God. And if he does not restore that which he has wickedly taken away, or lament with fit penitence the unlawful

[1] The one for women, dedicated to our Lady and St John; the other for men, dedicated to St Martin: the hospital in honour of St Andochius was also a monastery for monks.

acts he has done, let him be debarred from the holy body and blood of our God and Saviour, and remain subject in the eternal judgment to a severe retribution."[1]

Thus the hand of the Church began to write, but with the consent of the elective and limited royalty of conquering races, that new law of the West which, five centuries later than the monk Gregory I., was to be appealed to and applied in its full extent by the monk Gregory VII. and his successors. Nothing can better depict the difference of sentiment and attitude displayed by the Papacy towards the kings of the Germanic nations and the Byzantine emperors, than the contrast between this document and the almost passive obedience which St Gregory professed to the imperial court, even in his most energetic protests against certain of its acts. And nothing contradicts more entirely the chimerical distinction between the Roman emperors and the Barbarian kings, which he attempts to establish in his letter to Phocas.

[1] "Si quis vero regum, sacerdotum, judicum, personarumque secularium hanc constitutionis nostræ paginam agnoscens, contra eam venire tentaverit, potestatis honorisque sui dignitate careat reumque se divino judicio de perpetrata iniquitate cognoscat. Et nisi vel ea quæ ab illo male ablata sunt restituerit, vel digna pœnitentia illicite acta defleverit, a sacratissimo corpore ac sanguine Dei et Domini nostri Redemptoris J. C. alienus fiat atque in æterno examine districtæ ultioni subjaceat."—*Epist.*, xiii. 8, 9, 10. Oudin and Launoy have disputed the authenticity of this clause, but it has been put beyond a doubt by Mabillon and the Benedictine editors of St Gregory the Great. There are three similar charters for the three monasteries. Yepes gives a fourth, not unlike them in the main, in favour of the monastery of St Medard, at Soissons, but it is unanimously regarded as false.

Gregory did not confine himself to these relations with the princes and bishops of Austrasia and Burgundy. He wrote to Clotharius II., king of Neustria, and to the principal bishops of that portion of Gaul, recommending them to undertake the work of converting the Anglo-Saxons, the object of his special predilection, which he had never lost sight of amid the most serious troubles, and in which Brunehaut co-operated zealously. On this account he also entered into correspondence with the principal bishops of the north and west of Gaul: he enjoined them, as he had urged the bishops of Burgundy and Austrasia, with the most earnest entreaties, to combat the various ecclesiastical abuses, unlawful ordinations, and especially simony, which he everywhere calls heresy, and which made frightful progress every day, disguising itself under a thousand different forms, infecting already all the grades of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in all Christian countries, and threatening to consume like a cancer the vigour and beauty of the Church, thanks to the connivance and complicity of too many bishops.[1]

Relations with the bishops of Neustria.

In all his relations with the bishops, not only of Gaul, but of entire Christendom, he always manifested the affectionate respect with which the episcopal character and form inspired him, and which

His respect for the Episcopate,

[1] "Has pestiferas hæreses cernens per sacerdotum conniventiam sive taciturnitatem magis magisque diffusis muneribus quasi pestifer cancer . . . corrodere . . . ac corrumpere."—JOAN. DIAC., *Vit. S. Greg.*, iii. 4.

he had so eloquently expressed in the contest touching the title of universal patriarch. "God forbid," he wrote, "that I should desire to infringe the decrees of our ancestors in any Church, to the prejudice of my colleagues in the priesthood; for I should thus injure myself by interfering with the rights of my brethren." And, elsewhere, "Receive this as certain in matters of ecclesiastical privilege, that we will preserve its rights to each individual Church, as we defend our own. . . . I desire to honour by every means my brethren in the episcopate." [1] At the same time he gave to the jurisdiction of the Holy See a range and authority which had never been better established. He extended it even to Jerusalem, and beyond the extremities of the Roman world, to Ireland and Iberia. He replied to applications for advice from Caucasus, and encouraged the attempts made to convert Persia. He reduced to due limits the power of the metropolitans, who seemed disposed to assume an authority superior to that of the other bishops, and independent of the Holy See; he settled that none of them should be ordained without the confirmation of the pope. His struggles with the metropolitans of Cagliari, of Ravenna, and, above all, of Salona, were among the greatest trials of his pontificate; but he overcame all resistance. His vigi-

[1] "Mihi injuriam facio, si patrum meorum jura perturbo."—*Epist.*, ii. 25. "Sicut nostra defendimus, ita singulis quibusque Ecclesiis sua jura servamus. . . . Fratres meos per omnia honorare cupio."—*Epist.*, ii. 47. Compare i. 23, iii. 29.

lant eye and eloquent voice everywhere stimulated the re-establishment and exact observance of the canons, and especially the freedom of episcopal elections, which were then in the hands of the clergy and people of each diocese. Very urgent motives were necessary to induce him to limit that liberty, or even indirectly to interfere in that choice. During the vacancy of the see of Milan, when it was announced to him that one of his most intimate friends would be elected, he answered, "I have long resolved never to meddle, for the advantage of any one whatsoever, in the collation of spiritual charges: I shall confine myself to following with my prayers the election which you are about to make, in order that God may grant you a pastor who will lead you in the pastures of the divine word." [1]

And for freedom of elections.

His vigilant solicitude for the observance of canonical laws.

But the less he was disposed to interfere in the designation of those elected, the more he required that they should rigidly fulfil the conditions of canonical laws.[2] He did not simply refuse to recognise a person elected contrary to the canons; he excluded him from all ecclesiastical dignities, and sometimes went so far as to subject him to a penitentiary detention in some monastery, in company with the bishops who had consecrated him.[3] He did not hesitate to depose the bishops who showed them-

[1] "Quia antiquæ meæ deliberationis intentio est ad suscipienda pastoralis curæ onera pro nullius unquam misceri persona, orationibus prosequor electionem vestram."—*Epist.*, iii. 29.

[2] LAU., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[3] *Epist.*, xiii. 45.

selves unworthy of their charge.[1] Upon those whom he judged worthy he exercised an attentive and indefatigable watchfulness, to constrain them to residence, to pastoral visits, and to that great art of preaching which he himself practised with so much eloquence and assiduity even amid the harassments of the supreme pontificate. He recommended them to make their internal life in harmony with the external solemnity of their functions and pious demonstrations; for, said he, prayer is vain if conduct is evil.[2] He was not content with regular morals and irreproachable faith; he would have them besides sufficiently endowed with energy and capacity; for, "in our times," he said, "we must confide power into the hands of those who will not be solely engrossed by the salvation of souls, but will also be mindful of the defence and temporal interests of their inferiors."[3] His truly paternal authority disdained puerile and troublesome homage. He turned away with repugnance from the exaggerated demonstrations of respect towards himself in which certain bishops took pleasure. "I love not," he said, "these vain and foolish exaggerations."[4] He fixed for every five years, instead of every three, the term of the periodical and obligatory visit of

[1] For example, Demetrius, bishop of Naples.

[2] "Nam inanis fit oratio, ubi prava est actio."—*Epist.*, xi. 51, to the bishops of Sicily.

[3] "Talis hoc tempore in arce regiminis . . . qui . . . de extrinseca subjectorum utilitate et cautela sciat esse sollicitus."—*Epist.*, x. 62.

[4] "Quia vana et stulta superfluitas non delectat."—*Epist.*, i. 36.

the bishops to Rome. The priests and all the orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were objects of the same solicitude and severe vigilance.

His correspondence.

His vast correspondence testifies at once to the unwearied activity of his administration, his ardent zeal for justice and discipline, and the increasing development of questions of canonical law and discipline which began to replace, especially in the West, the dogmatic questions which had been sufficiently elaborated in the five general councils held up to that time.

Order re-established in the patrimony of St Peter.

Those argus eyes which incessantly superintended the Christian world[1] did not pass over the vast domains of the Church which, under the name of the patrimony of St Peter, were already formed, not only in Gaul, as has been already seen, but in Africa, Corsica, Dalmatia, Sicily, and especially in the south of Italy. Before Gregory, negligence and confusion reigned everywhere in these lands. He neglected no means of re-establishing order and restoring them to their just value. His letters show that he considered no detail beneath him to attain that end, and that it was his special endeavour to rule them with the most exact justice. The spirit of the disciple of St Benedict, the monk who, careful, attentive, and just, appreciated so highly the rights of labour, is evident at every step. He wrote to Peter, the administrator of the Roman

[1] "Velut argus quidem luminosissimus per totius mundi latitudinem . . . oculos circumtulerit."—JOAN. DIAC., ii. 55.

Church in Sicily, that letter which deserves to be inscribed by the side of the noblest titles of the papacy: "We understand that the price paid for corn to the peasant subjects of the Church is lowered in times of abundance: we desire that they shall always be paid according to the current price. . . . We forbid that the farmers shall pay more than the rate fixed in their lease; and we shall withdraw all the disgraceful exactions which shall exceed the sums prescribed in proportion to their ability. And in order that no one after our death may be able to impose these burdens anew, let them be invested in their lands by a written form which shall state the sum which each one has to pay. . . . We would not have the coffers of the Church soiled with sordid gains."[1]

He protects the peasants,

The devoted friend of the peasants, who had scarcely escaped from the deadly pressure of Roman taxation when they fell into the hands of the Barbarian conquerors, less skilfully rapacious but more brutal, he especially employed his power in reducing their burdens, guaranteeing the freedom of their marriages, the security of their possessions, and the inviolability of their inheritances. He placed at

[1] "Quia nos sacculum Ecclesiæ ex lucris turpibus nolumus inquinari."—*Epist.*, i. 44. Compare ii. 32. In the last we find this often-quoted passage, which indicates at once the simplicity and modesty of the great man:—"You have sent me a bad horse and five good asses. I cannot mount the horse because it is bad, nor the asses because they are asses; if you would help to support us, send us things which are suitable to us." The ecclesiastical domains in Sicily maintained four hundred stallions.

the head of his domains, in each province, no longer laymen, but ecclesiastics imbued with his own spirit, from whom he exacted a promise before the tomb of St Peter, that they would manage the patrimony of the Church as the treasury of labourers and the poor. He extended this solicitude even beyond the limits of his own possessions; and it is pleasant to see the head of the universal Church turn from his struggles with Byzantium and the Lombards to take in hand the interests of some obscure husbandmen of the island of Sardinia. "I have learned," he wrote to the bishop of Cagliari, "that certain laymen, charged with the administration of your patrimony, have committed depredations to the detriment of your peasants, and refused to render an account: it becomes you, after having examined into this with the utmost rigour, to decide, according to the justice of the case, between your peasants and these men, in order to make them if possible disgorge their prey."[1]

The freemen,

He was everywhere the man of justice and freedom. It was not alone the interests of the Church, its possessions and vassals, which inspired his zeal. He endeavoured to defend the rights and liberty of all, by the influence of his spiritual authority and the freedom of his pontifical language, against the exactions, the arbitrary violence, and cruelty of the

[1] "In rusticorum vestrorum deprædationibus . . . deprehensi. . . . Convenit inter eos Ecclesiæque vestræ rusticos causam examinari subtilius."—*Epist.*, ix. 65.

imperial magistrates;[1] and, addressing himself to the ex-consul Leontius, the envoy of the Emperor Maurice, he set down this great principle of Christian policy, always ignored, but always undeniable: "You should watch over the liberty of those whom you judge as over your own; and if you would hinder your superiors from trampling your freedom under foot, know how to honour and guard that of your inferiors."[2]

The slaves,

All who were oppressed, all the victims of power or wickedness, found in him a champion.[3] He interfered indignantly concerning "the atrocious and unheard-of crime" committed by a vassal of the diocese of Messina, in carrying away his godson's young wife to sell her to another: and threatened with canonical punishment not the guilty person only, but the bishop of the diocese who left such attempts unpunished.[4]

It might be said that he anticipated the abolition of slavery in this preamble to an act of enfranchisement. "Since the Redeemer and Creator of the world made himself incarnate in the form of humanity, in order to break the chain of our

[1] "Libertatem uniuscujusque hominis contra judicum insolentias liberis vocibus defendebat . . . cunctorum judicum cupiditates vel scelera quasi cuneo frenoque pontificii sui . . . restringebat."—JOAN. DIAC., ii. 47, 48.

[2] "Libertatem eorum . . . ut vestram specialiter attendere debetis . . . subjectorum vestrorum honorando libertatem custodite."—*Epist.*, x. 51.

[3] "Ab adversis potestatibus prægravatos fortissimus miles Christi Gregorius viriliter defendebat."—JOAN. DIAC., iv. 21.

[4] *Epist.*, vi. 13.

slavery by the grace of freedom, and to restore us to our pristine liberty, it is well and wise to restore the benefit of original liberty to men whom nature has made free, and whom the laws of men have bowed under the yoke of servitude. For this reason we make you, Montanus and Thomas, servants of the holy Roman Church, which we also serve with the help of God, free from this day, and Roman citizens, and we make over to you all your stock of money."[1] Even in his theological expositions, in his commentaries on Job, this image of slavery still pursues him: "The penitent sinner here below," says he, "is like a slave who has fled from his master, but who is not yet free: he has deserted his sins by contrition, but he must still fear the chastisement. He will be truly enfranchised, truly free, only in heaven, where he can no longer doubt his pardon, where he shall lose even the recollection of his fault, and where he shall taste the serenity and joy of freedom."[2]

Until this terrible stain of slavery could be entirely effaced in the full light of Christianity, Gregory ordained that every pagan or Jewish slave who desired to become a Christian should be freed

[1] "Dirupto quo tenebamur capti vinculo servitutis . . . salubriter agitur, si homines, quos ab initio natura liberos protulit, et jus gentium jugo substituit servitutis, in ea qua nati fuerant manumittentis libertate reddantur."—*Epist.*, vi. 12.

[2] "Servus ergo hic jam fugit dominum, sed liber non est. . . . Ibi ergo . . . ubi jam . . . de ejus indulgentia liber exsultet."—*Moral.*, l. iv. c. 36.

at the cost of the Church: above all, he would not suffer Christians to remain the slaves of Jews. When he could not free them otherwise by legal means, he caused them to be redeemed out of the ecclesiastical treasury.[1] However, he checked energetically the rigorous measures and popular violence to which the Jews, in the midst of new-born Christendom, were already exposed. His conduct and precepts on this subject formed a striking contrast to the odious persecution then inflicted by the intolerant zeal of the new Christians in Gaul and Spain upon the children of Israel.[2] He strictly interdicted the bishops of Arles and Marseilles from baptising them by force. He obliged the bishops of Terracina, of Palermo, and Cagliari to restore to them the synagogues from which they had been expelled. "It is by gentleness," he wrote to these prelates, "by benevolence and exhortations that we must lead the unbelievers back to unity, lest we alienate by terrors and menaces those whom charitable preaching and the fear of the last judgment shall not have established in the faith. We must use such moderation with them that they will not resist us; but we must never constrain

And the Jews.

[1] "Si quos Christianorum pro longitudine itineris per provincias ab Hebræorum servitio *per legalem violentiam* liberare non poterat, suis pretiis redumendos esse censebat."—JOAN. DIAC., iv. 44. Compare 46.

[2] Chilperic, king of Neustria, had them baptised by force in 582. Sigibert, king of the Visigoths, made a law in 613 to scourge and exile from Spain all Jews who would not consent to be baptised.

them against their will, since it is written, 'Offer yourselves a willing sacrifice.'"[1]

His conduct towards pagans,

It may be affirmed that this sentiment of intelligent and liberal charity was the leading principle of his generous efforts to root out the remains of paganism, as well as those of heresy and schism, from the countries where his authority transcended every other. And if he sometimes appears to derogate from this by rigorous measures, which we lament to find in the history of so noble a life, it must be acknowledged that these fell always far short of the severity authorised by the laws and manners of his time. Thus it is lamentable to see him lend his authority to the corporal punishment of the Barbaricians,[2] a pagan tribe from Africa, whom the Vandals had left in the island of Sardinia; and elsewhere to enjoin, now that a higher rate of taxes should be exacted from the pagans who refused to be converted,[3] and now that the Jews should be allured to baptism by the bait of taking off a third from the rent of their farms.

For this proceeding he gave the melancholy reason which has since served other proselytisers: "If

[1] *Epist.*, i. 35; vii. 5, 2.

[2] "Jam Barbaricinos, Sardos et Campaniæ rusticos, tam prædicationibus quam verberibus emendatos a paganizandi vanitate removerat."—JOAN. DIAC., iii. 1.

[3] *Epist.*, iv. 26. I cannot but recall here that, in the eighteenth century, the Puritans of Maryland employed precisely the same means, when they had the majority, to pervert the Catholics whom they had received into that colony, which was founded on the express stipulation of religious liberty for all.—See ED. LABOULAYE, *Histoire des Etats-Unis*, t. i.

they are not sincerely converted themselves, their children at least will be baptised with better will."[1] But even this was an improvement upon the custom of judges and even bishops, who made the peasants pay for permission to worship their gods, and even continued to extort that tribute after these pagans had been converted. He was careful to interdict all vexatious taxes imposed upon old or new Catholics under pretence of heresy, and every kind of violence against schismatics, however obstinate.[2] He succeeded, notwithstanding, in destroying in Africa the heresy of the Donatists, which had lasted nearly two centuries, and which had consumed the strength of St Augustine: he proceeded in this matter with as much prudence as energy, respecting the ancient customs which were not contrary to the Catholic faith, and refusing to approve of the too rigorous measures decreed by the Council of Carthage against all bishops who did not pursue the heretics with sufficient ardour.[3] After this council, held in 594, the Donatists disappear from history.

And the Donatists.

He had also the good fortune to terminate the

[1] *Epist.*, v. 8. This was repeated by Mme. de Maintenon after the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

[2] "Sub prætextu hæresis affligi quempiam veraciter profitentem fidem catholicam non sinamus."—*Epist.*, v. 15. "Schismaticos ad recipiendam satisfactionem venire invitabat, quibus etiam, si nusquam ad unitatem Ecclesiæ redire voluissent, *nullam se facturum violentiam promittebat.*"—JOAN. DIAC., v. 37; *Epist.*, iv. 49. Let us observe also his extreme gentleness towards certain Christians of the island of Corsica who had relapsed into paganism.—*Epist.*, viii. i.

[3] *Epist.*, v. 5.

He puts an end to the schism of the Three Chapters.

schism of Aquileia, which had for half a century separated from the body of the Church the bishops of Venetia and Istria, obstinate defenders of the *three chapters* condemned at the fifth general council; and although this schism was founded upon a sort of insurrection of Latin or Italian feeling against the intemperate interference of the Eastern emperors on theological questions, Gregory had specially to contend with the artifices used by Byzantine agents to keep up that division.

Services rendered to the Liturgy,

The services which he rendered to the Liturgy are well known. In that particular, no pope has equalled him. Completing and putting in order the work of his predecessors, he gave its definitive form to the holy sacrifice of the mass, and the worship of the Roman Church, in that celebrated Sacramentary which, retouched and added to during following ages, remains the most august monument of liturgical science. It may also be

And to Christian art.

said that he created, and by anticipation saved, Christian art, by fixing, long before the persecution of the iconoclasts made that the duty of the Church, the true doctrine respecting the worship of images, in that fine letter to the bishop of Marseilles, in which he reproves him for having, in the excess of his zeal against idolatry, broken the statues of the saints, and reminds him that through all antiquity the history of the saints has been represented in pictures; that painting is to the ignorant

what writing is to those who can read, and that images are principally useful to the poor.[1]

But his name is specially associated, in the history of Catholic worship, with that branch of religious art which is identified with worship itself, and which is of the utmost moment to the piety as to the innocent joy of the Christian people.[2]

The name of the *Gregorian Chant* reminds us of his solicitude for collecting the ancient melodies of the Church, in order to subject them to the rules of harmony, and to arrange them according to the requirements of divine worship. He had the glory of giving to ecclesiastical music that sweet and solemn, and, at the same time, popular and durable character, which has descended through ages, and to which we must always return after the most prolonged aberrations of frivolity and innovation. He made out himself, in his Antiphonary, the collection of ancient and new chants; he composed the text and music of several hymns which are still used by the Church; he established at Rome the celebrated school of religious music, to which Gaul, Germany, England, all the Christian nations, came in turn, trying with more or less success to assimilate their voices to the purity of

Gregorian Chant.

[1] *Epist.*, xi. 13.

[2] In several churches, and during several centuries, a prose, in honour of St Gregory, was sung before the introit of the first Sunday of Advent, in which occur the following verses :—

"Tradidit hic cantum populis normamque canendi,
Quod Domino laudes referant noctuque dieque."

—GERBERT, *De Cant. et Mus. Sacrii*, t. i. lib. 2, ap. LAU. 245.

Italian modulations.[1] A pleasant legend, much esteemed in the middle ages, shows the great effect which the services of Gregory had produced on all nations. According to this tale, it was in considering the fascination exercised by profane music, that he was led to inquire whether he could not, like David, consecrate music to the service of God. And as he dreamt of this subject one night, he had a vision in which the Church appeared to him under the form of a muse, magnificently adorned, who, while she wrote her songs, gathered all her children under the folds of her mantle; and upon this mantle was written the whole art of music, with all the forms of its tones, notes, and neumes, and various measures and symphonies. The pope prayed God to give him the power of recollecting all that he saw; and after he awoke, a dove appeared, who dictated to him the musical compositions with which he has enriched the Church.[2]

A more authentic memorial is that of the little chamber which he occupied in the school of music,

[1] All musical historians have quoted the grotesque description which the Italian biographer of St Gregory gives of the efforts of the Germans and French of the ninth century, to harmonise the songs of the Gregorian school: "Alpina siquidem corpora vocum suarum tonitruis altisone perrepentia, susceptæ modulationis dulcedinem, proprie non resultant: quia bibuli gutturis barbara levitas, dum in flexionibus et repercussionibus mitem nititur edere cantilenam, naturali quodam fragore, quasi plaustra per gradus confuse sonantia rigidas voces jactat."—JOAN. DIAC., ii. 7.

[2] "Vidit sanctam Ecclesiam ornatam et compositam quæ quasi musa cantum suum componit . . . quasi gallina pullos . . . et quasi sub uno dragmæ tegmine tabellulæ, ubi scripta erat ars musica, nomina tonorum et neumatum numeri."—JOANN. PRESBYT., *De Musica quomodò per B. Gregorum perinventa*, lib. 3, ap. GERBERT, *op. cit.*, lib. ii., par. ii. c. i.

which he had established near the Lateran, and where, three centuries after his death, the bed upon which he reclined while singing was still to be seen, and the whip with which he corrected the children, whose musical education he thus watched over.[1]

His assumed antipathy to classical literature.

Must we now condescend to refute, after the example of many other writers, the calumnious accusations brought against Gregory by blind enemies, and sometimes by imprudent admirers, on the subject of his supposed contempt for literature and science? He is accused of having destroyed the ancient monuments of Rome, burnt the Palatine library, destroyed the writings of Cicero and Titus Livius, expelled the mathematicians from Rome, and reprimanded Bishop Didier of Vienne for teaching grammar to children. None of these imputations, except the last, is founded upon any authority earlier than the twelfth century.[2] The most authentic evidence, on the contrary, exhibits him to us as educated in the schools, as nourished by the wise discipline of ancient Rome, and surrounded by the most learned priests and monks of his time, making the seven liberal arts, as his biographer says, noble pillars of the portico of the apostolical chair.[3]

[1] "Ubi usque hodie lectus ejus in quo recubans modulabatur, et flagellum ipsius . . . cum authentico antiphonario reservatur."—JOAN. DIAC., l. c.

[2] The first author who has mentioned this, and with praise, is John of Salisbury, who died in 1183.

[3] "Septemplicibus artibus veluti columnis nobilissimorum totidem lapidum apostolicæ sedis atrium fulciebat."—JOAN. DIAC., ii. 13. Compare *ibid.*, c. 14.

His contemporary, Gregory of Tours, who visited him in Rome, says of him, that he was unequalled for grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric.[1] He had, doubtless, made many efforts to root out paganism, which perpetuated itself in the literary tastes and popular habits of that Italy, where a short time before St Benedict had found a temple of Apollo upon the summit of Monte Cassino. He disapproved of bestowing exclusive attention upon mythological subjects, but never either wrote or commanded anything against the study of humane or classical literature. He has, on the contrary, proved at length that this study was a useful preparation and indispensable help to the understanding of sacred literature. He regarded the disgust of certain Christians for literary studies as a temptation of the devil, and added: "The devils know well that the knowledge of profane literature helps us to understand sacred literature. In dissuading us from this study, they act as the Philistines did, when they interdicted the Israelites from making swords or lances, and obliged that nation to come to them for the sharpening of their axes and ploughshares."[2]

[1] "Litteris grammaticis dialecticisque ac rhetoricis ita erat institutus ut nulli in urbe ipsa putaretur esse secundus."—GREG. TURON., *Hist. Franc.*, x. 1.

[2] "Ad hoc tantum liberales artes discendæ sunt ut per instructionem illarum divina eloquentia subtilius intelligatur. . . . A nonnullorum cordibus discendi desiderium maligni spiritus tollunt, ut et sæcularia nesciant et ad sublimitatem spiritualium non pertingant. Aperte quidem dæmones sciunt quia, dum sæcularibus litteris instruimur, in spiritualibus adjuvamur. . . . Cum nos ea discere dissuadent, quid aliud quam ne

He reproved the bishop of Vienne only for devoting himself to reading and teaching the profane poets, to the prejudice of the dignity of his charge, and represented to him that the praises of Jupiter did not come fitly from the same lips which uttered those of Jesus Christ.[1] It is by an exaggeration of humility that, in the dedication of his book upon Job, he shows a scorn of grammar and barbarity of language which is nowhere to be found in his writings. He certainly did not write the Latin of Cicero or even of Tacitus, but he contributed as much as St Augustine to form the new Latin, the Christian Latin, destined to become the language of the pulpit and the school, and from which all our modern languages have proceeded.[2]

His writings.

It cannot be expected that we should examine, even passingly, the writings of St Gregory the Great. They largely contributed to procure him this surname; which implies that they are equal to his glory, and have largely contributed to the happy influence of his genius upon the destinies of the Church.

In an age when everything seemed giving way, and in which it was necessary to struggle, not only against the quibbles of heresy, but especially against exhausted courage, the despair of the van-

lanceam ut gladium faciamus præcavent?"—*Liv.* v. *in Primum Regum*, c. xxx. §. 30.

[1] "Quia in uno se ore cum Jovis laudibus laudes Christi non capiunt."—*Epist.*, xi. 54.

[2] OZANAM, fragment already quoted.

quished, and the savage pride of the conquerors, he concerns himself less with the necessities of the intellect than with the purification and elevation of the human will. Many of the Fathers of the Church have surpassed him in style and eloquence; his style is too redundant, too evidently marked by the rhetorical habits of a declining age; but no man ever understood the human soul better, analysed more closely its miseries and necessities, or indicated with greater clearness and energy the remedy for these evils. No one has spoken or written with an austerity greater or better acknowledged by posterity; no one has so completely set forth the constitution and doctrine of the Church. We have already spoken of his *Sacramentary*, which determined the chants, the language and the form of the liturgy, and also of his *Dialogues*, which have been the model of the hagiography of the middle ages. Let us further refer to his *Pastoral*, in which he has collected the rules which should regulate the vocation, life, and doctrine of pastors, and where he mingles his instructions with touching and noble reflections upon his own infirmity. It has been said with justice that this book gave form and life to the entire hierarchical body, and made the bishops who have made modern nations.[1] Then came his admirable works upon Holy Scripture; and above all, the thirty-five books of *Moralia*, or commentaries on the

The *Moralia*.

[1] OZANAM, unpublished fragment.

book of Job, begun at Constantinople before his election, and continued during his pontificate, which popularised the secrets of asceticism by developing the loftiest traditions of Biblical interpretation, and were worthy of becoming, through all the middle ages, the text-book of moral theology. In our own days, the portion of his works which is read with greatest interest are his thirteen volumes of *Epistles*, the collection of that immense correspondence by which he conducted, day by day, and according to the necessities of the time, the usual legislation of the Church, in which his unwearied eye visited from Ireland to Caucasus the furthest corners of the Christian world, and in which he has traced at the same time a living picture of his own age, and the annals of that great government of souls, and even of temporal interests, which he exercised with so much justice, prudence, activity, wisdom, and compassion. His epistles.

He was, besides, an eloquent and unwearied preacher, and esteemed it of the highest importance that this duty should be fulfilled by other bishops as it was by himself.[1] He devoted himself to this without intermission, even in the most serious difficulties of his charge. He was prone to deride those sacred orators who sometimes did not speak enough, and sometimes spoke too much; wordy in superfluous matters, mute in things necessary.[2] His twenty- His sermons.

[1] *Regula Pastoralis*, part iii. c. 25.

[2] "Verbosus in superfluis, mutus in necessariis."

two homilies on Ezekiel were delivered by him before the people, as has been formerly mentioned, during the siege of Rome by the Lombards. Of his forty homilies upon the Gospel, twenty were preached by himself, and the other twenty were read to the people by a notary, in consequence of the personal sufferings which prevented him from ascending the pulpit.

He was the fourth great doctor of the Church.

A theologian, a philosopher, and an orator, he is worthy of taking his place by that triple title, in the veneration of Christendom, beside Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, to be ranked with them among the four great doctors of the Western Church, and to take his place thus in the first rank of that order of which he himself has said: "In Ecclesia ordo doctorum quasi rex præsidet, quem fidelium suorum turba circumstat."[1]

His extreme humility.

He would never have judged himself worthy of such an honour, for he despised his own works. He composed his *Morals* only at the entreaty of his friend St Leander, and before sending him the work which was dedicated to him, desired to submit it to the judgment of the various monasteries in Rome. He did not suppose it adapted to become a means of instruction to the Christian world, and was distressed that, in his lifetime, a bishop had read it in public. "So long as I live, I desire, if I succeed in saying something that is good, that men should not know of it."[2] We recognise the humility of

[1] *Moral.*, lib. xx. c. 5.

[2] "Necque enim volo, dum in hac carne sum, si qua dixisse me contigit, ea facile hominibus innotesci."—*Epist.*, xii. 24.

the pontiff in the tale which informs us how, seeing a Persian abbot prostrate himself at his feet, he himself knelt before the Oriental to prevent such a homage.[1]

His humility as a monk should be also acknowledged here; which reminds us that it is our special business to show the monk in the great pope, of whom we have, perhaps, spoken at too great length. In his public life, in his immortal reign, and especially in his writings, everything bears the ineffaceable impression of his monastic education and spirit. It only remains for us to tell what he did to regulate and increase the progress of the order of which he was, after St Benedict, the principal ornament, the second legislator, and, according to some, the true founder in the West.

He continues always a monk.

Of the services rendered to his order by the first monk who was raised to the papacy, that biography of the holy patriarch which is contained in the second book of the *Dialogues*, and which no one since then has ever undertaken to do over again, must hold the highest place. But he did still more in completing and sanctioning the rule of Benedict by the supreme authority of the apostolical see. In the Council of Rome in 595, he solemnly approved and confirmed this rule.[2] In the Council of 601, he

Services rendered to the monastic order.

He confirms the rule of St Benedict.

[1] SOPHRONIUS. *Pratum Spirituale*, ap. YEPES, t. i. p. 424.

[2] BARONIUS, *Annal.*, ad an. 595, ex MS. Sublacensi. The authenticity of this charter has been disputed, but it is evident that Gregory sanctioned the rule of St Benedict either then, or afterwards, by Canon VII. of the Second Council of Douzy, near Sedan, in 874, which says:

He guarantees the liberty and property of the monks.

gave a constitution destined to establish and guarantee the freedom of the monks.[1] This decree commences thus: "The charge which we formerly filled as head of a monastery, has taught us how necessary it is to provide for the tranquillity and security of the monks; and as we know that most of them have had to suffer much oppression and injustice at the hands of the bishops, it concerns our fraternal feeling to provide for their future repose." Then, in the name of Jesus Christ and St Peter, he interdicts bishops as well as secular persons from diminishing the property, revenues, or titles of monasteries. He ordains that disputes relative to the land claimed in the name of episcopal churches should be decided by the abbots or other arbitrators fearing God. He arranges that after the death of every abbot, his successor should be chosen by the free and unanimous consent of the community, and drawn from its own bosom; that once elected and ordained without fraud or bribery, the abbot could only be deprived of the government of the monastery for crimes provided for by the canons. No monk could be taken from his monastery to be employed in the duties of the secular clergy. Monks ordained priests by the consent of the abbot must

"Eadem regula S. Spiritu promulgata et laudis auctoritate B. papæ Gregorii inter canonicas scripturas et catholicorum doctorum scripta teneri decreta est."

[1] "Decretum Constituti nomine appellari solitum. . . . Decretum Gregorii papæ de libertate monachorum."—*Not. ad. Concil.*, ed. *Coletti*, t. vi. p. 1343.

leave the monastery. The bishops are further forbidden to proceed with inventories of monastic goods after the death of the abbot, to celebrate public masses in the churches of the monks, drawing the crowd and women there, as also from erecting their own pulpit, or exercising the slightest authority there, except at the desire of the abbot.[1] We desire, said the pope in concluding the proclamation of his decree, that this passage written by us should be always and inviolably observed by the bishops, in order that the monks may not be turned aside from divine service by any trouble or vexation on the part of ecclesiastics or secular persons. All the bishops present at the council answered: "We rejoice in the freedom of the monks, and confirm all that your holiness ordains."[2] And all signed, to the number of twenty, with fourteen cardinal priests, and four deacons of the Roman Church.

Amid the disorders and conflicts which agitated the Church and wasted Christendom, the work of St Benedict was thus invested with the highest

[1] "Quam sit necessarium monachorum quieti prospicere . . . anteactum nos officium quod in regimine cœnobii exhibuimus informat, et quia in plerisque monasteriis multa a præsulibus præjudicia et gravamina monachos pertulisse cognovimus, oportet ut nostræ fraternitatis provisio de futura eorum quiete salubri disponat ordinatione. . . . Ut nullus episcoporum seu sæcularium ultra præsumat . . . non extraneus eligatur, nisi de eadem congregatione, quem sibi propria voluntate concors fratrum societas elegerit. . . . Hanc scriptorum nostrorum paginam omni futuro tempore ab episcopis firmam statuimus illibatamque servari."—*Concil.*, l. c.

[2] "Libertati monachorum congaudemus, et quæ nunc de his statuit Beatitudo Vestra firmamus."—*Ibid.*

sanction existing upon earth. The free choice of its chiefs, and the inviolability of its property, the two fundamental principles of every independent and regular society, were guaranteed to the monastic order by the most solemn act, emanating from a pope who remembered, and considered himself honoured in remembering, that he had been a monk.

Privileges accorded to various monasteries.

Along with this general liberty assured to the entire order, Gregory had conceded analogous and special privileges to several monasteries. He may be regarded as the principal author of what has since been called *exemptions*.[1] In releasing the great communities of Gaul and Italy in various essential points from episcopal jurisdiction, he evidently had in view only to fortify them in spiritual life, and to form so many centres of energetic resistance against the disorders which the different invasions and struggles of diverse races among themselves had made frequent in the ranks of the secular clergy. He said expressly to a community at Rimini, in conferring upon it the exemption it solicited : "You must now all the more be occupied with the work of God, all the more assiduous in

[1] Several examples of these are instanced prior to his pontificate and as far back as the first years of the sixth century, but they are not of a sufficiently authentic character. Some authors, however, among others Thomassin (*Vetus et Nova Disciplina*, pars i. lib. iii. c. 30), have maintained that, by his concessions, Gregory did not lessen the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishops over the communities. This appears difficult to prove in presence of the text, which is of a very different tenor. The first exemption given to a monastery in Gaul was by St Gregory to a community of women founded in honour of John Cassianus, at Marseilles. —*Epist.*, vii. 12.

prayer, for otherwise you should appear not to have sought greater security for your orisons, but only, which God forbid! to secure your laxness from episcopal severity."[1]

Distinction between monastic and clerical life.

It was also with this aim that he endeavoured to enforce a rigorous distinction between the ecclesiastical condition and monastic life, a distinction which completely disappeared in after times. He would not suffer either a priest or a deacon to become an abbot, or even a mere monk, unless he gave up his clerical functions; for, said he, "There are some who, feigning to live as monks, are ambitious of being placed at the head of monasteries, which they destroy by their manner of life."[2] He was very willing that there should be monks in the priesthood to celebrate mass in the communities;[3] above all, he had no intention of interdicting the elevation of monks to sacerdotal or episcopal dignity, of which there were several instances under his pontificate. But every monk called to an ecclesiastical office or benefice was to leave his monastery, never to return.[4] They had to choose between the clerical office and monastic life; for, according to Gregory,

[1] *Epist.*, ii. 42, ad Luminosum abbatem.

[2] "Dum hi fingunt se religiose vivere, monasteriis præponi appetunt, et per eorum vitam monasteria destruuntur."—*Epist.*, v. 1.

[3] *Epist.*, vi. 42.

[4] *Concil.* de 601, p. 1343, *ex. Cod. Flaviniac.* Compare *Epist.*, vii. 43. He would not consent that Urbicus, abbot of St Hermes and general superior of the Sicilian monasteries, should be elected archbishop of Palermo, "ne eum ad altiora producendo, minorem se ipso fieri missum in fluctibus compellerat."

each of these vocations is so great in itself, that no man can acquit himself in it worthily; and far from being able to exercise them together, they mutually injure each other.[1] The experience of Catholic ages has corrected upon that point the pious foresight of Gregory: and even in his own lifetime the new sees established in England by his disciples were filled only by monks.

Reform and consolidation of monastic discipline.

If the experience of monastic life which he had acquired as an abbot helped him to use his authority as pope to promote the peace and freedom of the monks—if he everywhere displayed a constant and efficient solicitude for the consolidation of the order—he always insisted at the same time upon the maintenance and establishment of the strictest discipline. At the time of his advent to the Holy See that discipline was already much relaxed. Monks wandered here and there, some expelled from their asylums by the Lombards, some voluntary deserters from a retirement which they had left in consequence of the too severe authority of one abbot, or the contagious laxness of another. The spirit of the world, the desire of property, the

[1] "Satis enim incongruum est, ut cum unum ex his pro sui magnitudine diligenter quis non possit explere, ad utrumque judicetur idoneus: sicque invicem et ecclesiasticus ordo vitæ monachicæ et ecclesiasticis utilitatibus regula monachatus impediat."—*Epist.*, iv. 21. This did not prevent many writers of his time from calling the monks indiscriminately *monachi* or *clerici:* see especially GREGORY OF TOURS, *De Gloria Mart.*, lib. i. c. 75. Compare MABILLON, *Præf. in sac. Bened.* See also in book iv., a reference to cap. 52 of the rule of St Benedict, upon the originally lax character of the monastic order.

habit of rebellion or licence, penetrated into the cloisters which still remained standing and inhabited. Gregory devoted himself to the work of monastic reform, and succeeded in it.' He invited the assistance sometimes of the abbots themselves, sometimes of the bishops, and still more frequently of the *defensores*, procurators or syndics of the Roman Church, whom he maintained in every province. He deposed without pity all the abbots who lived an irregular life.[1] He forbade the bishops to afford shelter to rebellious or vagabond monks, or those who were excommunicated by their abbots.[2] He would not have the Religious wander over the country or from one house to another.[3] To deprive both abbots and monks of all pretext for leaving their monastery, he ordained that each should have a secular and paid procurator. He watched especially over the strict observance of monastic continence, to such an extent that monasteries of the two sexes were withdrawn to a distance from each other, and women were rigorously forbidden to enter, upon any pretext whatever, into communities of men. In the islands of the Italian coast, already peopled with monks,[4] and to which the inhabitants

[1] *Epist.*, iii. 23, v. 3, 6.

[2] *Epist.*, vii. 35. An African abbot, called *Cumquo Deus*, had complained to him that his monks fled when he enforced a strict observance of the rule.

[3] *Epist.*, i. 41, 42, &c.

[4] Especially in the islands of Monte Christo and Gorgone. The life in these island monasteries was so difficult that Gregory forbade the reception of young people under eighteen, and ordered that all who were below that age should be sent back to Rome.

of Campania fleeing from the Barbarians had found a refuge, he commanded the rector of the pontifical patrimony to remove all the women.

He was specially desirous to seek out and shut up those monks who had left their communities in order to marry, and against whom the Council of Chalcedon had pronounced excommunication.[1] But even in applying these austere laws, the tender charity and amiable cordiality which distinguished his character always reappeared. A patrician of Syracuse, named Venantius, a great friend of Gregory, became a monk like him; but was afterwards disgusted with monastic life, and married. When Gregory became pope, one of his first cares was to recall himself to the recollection of his old friend, in order to enlighten him upon the seriousness of his condition. "Many fools believed," he wrote to him, "that when I became a bishop I should cease to see you or address you by letter; but it shall not be so, for my charge itself forbids me to be silent. . . . I will speak to you whether it pleases you or not, . . . because I desire above all either to save you, or at least not to be responsible for your loss. You know what habit you have worn, and into what an abyss you have fallen. . . . If Ananias merited the death you know of, for having stolen from God the pieces of money which he had offered to Him, think what you should merit who have stolen away from God not money, but your-

Venantius, the married monk.

[1] *Epist.*, i. 42.

self, after having dedicated yourself to Him under the monastic habit. I know well that as soon as my letter arrives, you will assemble your friends and literary clients, and consult upon this vital question those who have abetted your death. These people, like those who led you to crime, tell you only what will please you, because they love not yourself but what you have. If you need a counsellor take me, I beseech you. No one could be more faithful, for it is you I love and not your fortune. May Almighty God teach your heart to understand how much my heart loves and embraces you in everything that does not offend divine grace. And if you believe that I love you, come to the threshold of the apostles, and make use of me as your adviser. If you distrust the excess of my zeal, I offer you the advice of the whole Church, and I will willingly subscribe to whatever they decide by common accord."[1]

Venantius was deaf to the voice of the pontiff. Gregory notwithstanding remained his friend; he continued to write to him and also to his wife.[2] Ten years later, when they were both old and sick, he returned to the affectionate eloquence of his first exhortations. He entreated the bishop of Syracuse

[1] "Multi hominum stulti . . . putaverunt . . . te alloqui et per epistolas frequentare recusarem. . . . In quo habitu fueris recolis . . . ad quid sis delapsus agnoscis. . . . Scio quia cum epistola mea suscipitur, protinus amici conveniunt, literati clientes vocantur. . . . Consiliarium, rogo, me suscipe. . . . Quidquid omnibus fieri salubriter placet, ego in nullo contradico."—*Epist.*, i. 34.

[2] *Epist.*, ix. 123.

to neglect no means of leading Venantius, now a widower, to take again, if only on his deathbed, the monastic habit; and after the death of his friend he took under his special protection the two daughters whom he had left exposed to all kinds of dangers. The pope interested himself with his usual zeal in their fate and fortune; he wrote to them himself, engaged them to come to Rome to be near him, and was as a father to these orphans, whom he always called *his dearest daughters.*[1]

Female monasteries.

He took an equal interest in the discipline and prosperity of female convents.[2] The three sisters of his father had been nuns, and this domestic tie naturally increased his interest and enlightened his vigilance in respect to communities of virgins consecrated to God. A decree of his predecessor, Leo I., in conformity with several ancient councils, and confirmed by a law of the Emperor Majorian in 458, had ordained that nuns should not receive

[1] "Dulcissimæ filiæ."—*Epist.*, xi. 35, 36, 78.

[2] *Epist.*, iv. 9; v. 6, 24. There were from the first nuns of several kinds; most of them lived in communities, but others were solitary recluses, or, indeed, lived in their families, wearing the veil: various errors resulted from these last two methods, to which the popes and councils put an end. In his *Dialogues* St Gregory speaks of several holy nuns, entitling them *Ancilla Christi, Deo devota, confessa, reclusa;* he gives them also the name of *monialis*, which was afterwards the term generally used.

The three aunts of St Gregory were nuns of some domestic order; he speaks of them thus: "Tres pater meus sorores habuit, quæ cunctæ tres sacræ virgines fuerunt . . . . uno omnes ardore conversæ, uno eodemque tempore sacratæ, sub districtione regulari degentes, in domo propria socialem vitam ducebant."—*Hom.* 38, *in Evang.*

the veil and the solemn benediction without a novitiate which lasted up to their fortieth year.[1] Gregory ordained that the abbesses, chosen by the communities, should be at least sixty, and should possess an irreproachable reputation.[2] His paternal generosity provided for the necessities of the nuns who had taken refuge at Rome from the ruined monasteries of Italy, to the number of three thousand, and who suffered much from the cold during the hard winter of 597, leading all the while a most edifying life. "Rome owes to their prayers, their tears, and fasts," he wrote to the sister of the Emperor Maurice, "its deliverance from the swords of the Lombards."[3]

He proscribes the *peculiarity*.

It has been already seen with what rigour he pursued, as abbot, among the Religious, that offence which monastic phraseology called *péculiarité*, or the vice of personal property. As pope, he displayed the same severity. He refused to confirm the election of an abbot whom he knew to be stained with this vice. "I know that he loves property," he wrote, "which shows that he has not the heart of a monk. . . . If this love existed among us, there would be neither concord nor charity. What is monastic life, if not contempt

[1] These decrees only applied to the benediction or solemn profession, and did not prevent young girls from consecrating their virginity to God from infancy, as has been proved by a multitude of examples. This question has been thoroughly discussed by THOMASSIN, *Vetus et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplina*, pars i. lib. 3, c. 58.

[2] *Epist.*, iv. 11.

[3] *Ibid.*, vii. 26.

of the world? and how can we say that we despise the world if we seek its gain?"[1] The monks were debarred from making wills, as well as from possessing property of their own. In a council held at Rome in 600, the abbot Probus, who had succeeded Gregory as superior of the monastery of St Andrea, obtained, by special grace, the power of making his will in favour of his son, and that only in consequence of the pope's declaration that, being a mere recluse, he had been, in spite of himself, made abbot of a monastery in which he was not even a monk, without time being given him to dispose of his possessions before entering.

He watches over the sincerity of vocations.

The legitimacy and sincerity of religious vocations was still further the object of Gregory's special vigilance. It is evident from his writings that he had particularly studied the conditions proper to enlighten and decide Christians upon their spiritual vocation. In religious life itself, he would have none give himself up to a life of contemplation until he had been long and seriously tried in active life. "In order," he said, "to attain the citadel of contemplation, you must begin by exercising yourself in the field of labour." He insists at length upon the dangers of contemplative life for unquiet and presumptuous minds, who run the risk, by pride, of aspiring to surpass the powers of intellect, and of leading the weak astray, while

[1] "Cognovi quod peculiaritati studeat, quæ res maxime testatur eum cor monachi non habere."—*Epist.*, xii. 24.

they wandered astray themselves. "Whoever," he adds, "would devote himself to contemplation ought necessarily to examine himself thoroughly, to ascertain to what point he can love. For it is love which is the lever of the soul. This alone can raise it up, and, snatching it from the world, give it full power of wing, and make it soar into the skies."[1]

This intelligent study of the moral and internal life of the Religious rendered him only more attentive to the means by which the always increasing population of the monasteries was kept up. He enjoined a married man, who had become a monk in a Sicilian convent without the consent and simultaneous conversion of his wife, to return to her, marking thus, in his letter, the difference between divine and human laws concerning the indissolubility of marriage.[2] He forbade the superiors to give the monks the tonsure—that is, to receive them finally into the monastic order—before they had proved their conversion by a two years' novitiate: this was a year more than St Benedict had fixed.[3] He was especially desirous that this serious novitiate, during which the lay dress was still worn, should try the disposition of the multitude of laymen, and above all, of slaves, belonging either to

He doubles the length of the novitiate.

[1] "Necesse est ut quisquis ad contemplationem studia properat se metipsum subtiliter interroget, quantum amat. Machina quippe mentis est vis amoris: quæ hanc dum a mundo extrahit, in alta sustollit."—*Moralia*, liv. vi. c. 37.

[2] *Epist.*, xi. 50. [3] *Ibid.*, x. 24.

the Church or to secular masters, who sought an asylum in the monasteries, in order to change human servitude for the service of God. In the preamble of the decree which dealt with this matter in the Council at Rome in 595, it is said, "If we allow this to go on, all the lands of the Church will be abandoned; and if we repulse them without examination, we take away something from God who has given us all. It is necessary, then, that he who would give himself to God should first be tried in his secular dress, in order that, if his conduct shows the sincerity of his desire, he may be freed from the servitude of man to embrace a more rigorous service."[1] Slaves could become monks, according to a law of Justinian, without the consent of their masters, but had to be enfranchised by payment of their value: the slave who had

[1] "Cum ad clericalem professionem tam ex ecclesiastica quam ex sæculari militia quotidie pœne innumerabilis multitudo conflueret, nequaquam eos ad ecclesiastici decoris officium, sed ad capiendum solummodo monachicum propositum . . . suscipiendos censebat."—JOAN. DIAC., ii. 16. "Multos de ecclesiastica familiâ seu sæculari militia novimus ad omnipotentis Dei servitium festinare ut ab humana servitute liberi in divino servitio valeant familiarius in monasteriis conversari. . . . Necesse est ut quisquis ex juris ecclesiastici vel sæcularis militiæ servitute Dei ad servitium converti desiderat, probetur prius in laico habitû, et si mores ejus . . . in monasterio, servire permittatur ut ab humano servitio liber recedat qui in divino amore districtiorem subire appetit servitutem."—*Epist.*, iv. 44, ed. *Coletti. Append.* v. ed. *Bened.* Mabillon (*Ann. Bened.*, lib. viii. 60-61), Fleury (lib. 35, c. 43), and Lau (p. 236), are all agreed in applying the terms of this decree to slaves. Such grave authorities must be respected; yet, in recurring to the expressions of John the Deacon, which we quote above, we should be tempted to believe that it did not refer to those who fled from slavery properly so called, but only the ordinary service of the Church and State, or of secular life.

become a monk, and showed himself unfaithful to his new vocation, ran the risk of being sent back to his former master.[1]

In all this vast correspondence, by which Gregory in a manner took possession of the West for the papacy, I know not a more touching letter than one which he addressed to the sub-deacon of the Roman Church in Campania, on the subject of a young slave who was desirous of becoming a nun. "I understand that the defensor Felix possesses a young woman called Catella, who seeks with tears and vehement desire to take the veil, but whose master will not permit her to assume it. Now, I desire that you go to Felix and demand of him the soul of this girl: you shall pay him the price he wants, and send her here under the charge of competent persons, who will conduct her to a monastery. And do it speedily, that your delay may not put this soul in danger."[2]

The young slave Catella.

His exertions for the propagation of the Benedictine order were powerful and perpetual. He devoted a portion of the patrimony of the Church to found new monasteries in Italy. He erected the earliest religious houses in the island of Corsica. He confided to the monks the guardianship and service of several ancient churches, like that of St Pancra-

Monastic foundations.

[1] *Epist.*, v. c. 34.

[2] "Volumus ut experientia tua præfatum Felicem adeat, atque puellæ ejusdem animam sollicite requirat . . . pretium ejusdem puellæ suæ domino præbeat. . . . Ita vero age, ut non per lentam actionem tuam"—*Epist.*, iii. 40.

tius at Rome, and especially that of St Appollinaris or *Classe*, near Ravenna, a celebrated and sumptuous basilica, built by Justinian at the capital of the Byzantine and Ostrogoth government in Italy, upon the site chosen by Augustus as a port for his fleets in the Adriatic.[1] This new monastery, destined to become one of the principal centres of monastic life in Italy, received from Gregory the most extended privileges, to protect it against the encroachments of the clergy of Ravenna, who were noted for their readiness to invade the neighbouring monasteries. The archbishop of Ravenna, Marinian, although he had himself been a monk with Gregory, and was his old friend, saw with displeasure that great community exempted from his full jurisdiction, and this was the occasion of one of the disputes which disturbed their old friendship.[2]

Abbey of Classe.

Relations with Lerins.

These new foundations did not make him forget the old homes of monastic fervour. He congratulated the abbot of Lerins on the satisfactory account which he had transmitted by his legate Augustine, of the regularity and unanimity which still reigned in that famous isle. It is touching to see the apostle of England acting thus as intermediary between the great pope who had issued from the new Benedictine order, and the most illustrious monastery of ancient Gaul; and we love to learn, by the letter of St Gregory, that his paternal heart

[1] Fabbri, *Memor. di Ravenna*, pp. 103, 113, 339.
[2] *Epist.*, vi. 29.

appreciated the alms which came from Lerins in the shape of dishes and spoons, sent by the abbot for the service of the poor in Rome.[1]

He extended his protection to the monks in the East as well as in the West. In the beginning of his pontificate, he interfered with energy and perseverance between the patriarch of Constantinople and an abbot of the mountains of Isauria, in Asia Minor, who was accused of heresy, and whom the patriarch had caused to be beaten in one of the churches of the imperial city. Through this prolonged contest, he maintained, with his usual constancy, the observance of canons and the rights of innocence, which were equally outraged by the haughty rival of Roman supremacy.[2] He gave to another abbot of Isauria a grant from the revenues of the Roman Church more considerable than he asked, to relieve the necessities of his distant monastery.[3] He sent beds and clothing to St John Climachus, abbot of Mount Sinai, for the pilgrims who sought that sanctuary.[4] He sent monks from his own convent in Rome to Jerusalem, to found an hospital there. The rule of St Benedict, carried thus upon the wings of charity, penetrated into the East, and established itself amid the sons of Basil to await the Crusaders.[5]

With the monks of Isauria,

And of Jerusalem.

In his great correspondence he never ceased to

[1] "Cochleares et circulos."—*Epist.*, vi. 56.
[2] *Epist.*, iii. 53; vi. 66; vii. 34.
[3] *Ibid.*, v. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, xi. 1.
[5] JOAN. DIAC., ii. 52.

He always regretted his loss of monastic life,

extol and regret monastic life. Overwhelmed with cares, labours, and struggles, his thoughts always returned to the happy days which he had passed under the Benedictine frock. "I sailed before the wind," he wrote to his friend St Leander, bishop of Seville, "when I led a tranquil life in the cloister: now the tempest has seized me; I have lost my course; my mind has made shipwreck. Beaten by the waves, I seek the plank of your intercession for me, in order that, not being worthy to return rich with my ship safe and sound into port, I may at least struggle to shore by that plank."[1] He indemnified himself as he best could, by surrounding himself with his former brethren; and procured a decree for that purpose from the council held at Rome in 595, that the lay and secular officers who rendered private service to the popes should be replaced by clerical attendants, and even by monks, chosen with care, to be witnesses of his entire life. With those whom he had thus procured to be the familiar companions of his privacy, he applied himself to follow as far as possible, in his studies, occupations, and daily and nightly prayers, the customs of a monastery; so that the pontifical palace offered a picture of that church of the apostolical times of which monastic life was the most faithful image.[2]

And surrounded himself with monks.

[1] "Quasi prospero vento navigabam. . . . Saltem post damna ad littus per tabulam reducar."—*Epist.*, ix. 121.

[2] "Remotis a suo cubiculo secularibus, clericos ibi prudentissimos consiliaros familiaresque delegit, . . . monachorum vero sanctissimos sibi familiares elegit. . . . Cum quibus die noctuque versatus nihil monas-

Most of the monks whom he thus associated with his daily labours were drawn from his old monastery of St Andrea, in the inhabitants of which he had always an affectionate confidence. He promoted several to the episcopate, the most notable of whom were Maximin and Marinian,[1] whom he made archbishops—one in Sicily, the other at Ravenna; and afterwards Augustine, who was the apostle and first metropolitan of England. He loved to employ them as his legates, and to make them his representatives with princes whose alliance he sought in the interests of the Church. Probus, whom we have already mentioned, and who succeeded him as abbot of St Andrea, established peace between the King of the Lombards and the exarch of Ravenna; and Cyriac, who succeeded Probus in the government of the same abbey, was successively sent, as legate in Sardinia, to preach the faith to the unbelievers, and to Queen Brunehaut in Burgundy, and King Recarede in Spain, to root out simony, and the intrusion of laymen into the episcopate. The pope was not always equally fortunate in the bestowal of his confidence: witness that Greek monk, Andrew, who

He made some of them bishops and legates.

ticæ perfectionis in palatio, nihil pontificalis institutionis in Ecclesia dereliquit. . . . Cum eruditissimis clericis religiosissimi monachi. . . . Talem ecclesiam Romanam exhibuit qualis prima sub Apostolis fuit." —JOAN. DIAC., ii. 12.

[1] Marinian, who had long lived in the same monastery with Gregory, was elected, in spite of his own reluctance, and despairing of success, by the people of Ravenna, whose two previous elections the pope had refused to confirm. Gregory had, in the end, on more than one occasion, to reprimand and oppose his old friend.

served as his interpreter in his correspondence with the Eastern bishops (for Gregory knew no Greek), and who had to be punished for falsifying his translations, and attributing to the pontiff expressions which he had never used.[1]

His alms and hospitality worthy of his past monastic life.

Surrounded and assisted by his dear companions of old, Gregory brought from his monastery into the exercise of the sovereign pontificate that prodigality of alms and unwearied solicitude for the poor which he had learned and long practised at St Andrea. He invited twelve poor pilgrims to his table every day, and served them, after having washed their hands or their feet, as he was accustomed to do while an abbot.[2] Every month he distributed to his poor, according to the season, corn, wine, cheese, vegetables, fish, and oil; adding perfumes and other more delicate presents for the considerable people of the town, so as to make them regard the Church as the storehouse of the world.[3] He organised the regular service of charity in Rome with wise zeal; and carriages traversed the various quarters and streets daily, carrying help to the sick poor and those who were ashamed to beg;[4] to the latter he sent dishes from his own table, which he blessed for the use of his poor friends, before he

[1] *Epist.*, vii. 32; xi. 74.

[2] JOAN. DIAC., ii. 22, 23.

[3] "Ita ut nihil aliud quam communia quædam horrea communis putaretur Ecclesia."—*Ibid.*, 26.

[4] "Quotidianis diebus per omnes regionum vicos, vel compita . . . per constitutos veredarios. . . . Verecundioribus . . . ostiatim dirigere curabat scutellam."—*Ibid.*, 28.

touched his own repast. Two centuries after his death, the voluminous list of the poor who shared his alms in Rome, and also in the surrounding towns and on the coast, was still preserved.[1] A beggar having been found dead, in a distant quarter of the town, he feared that the unfortunate man had died of famine, and, reproaching himself with having been his murderer, he abstained for several days from celebrating mass.[2]

His great sufferings.

This spirit, so sensitive to the griefs of others, was itself a prey to the most painful infirmities. The gout made the last years of his life a kind of martyrdom. The cry of pain appears in many of his letters. "For nearly two years," he wrote to the patriarch of Alexandria, "I have been imprisoned to my bed by such pangs of gout that I can scarcely rise for two or three hours on great holidays to celebrate solemn mass. And the intensity of the pain compels me immediately to lie down again, that I may be able to endure my torture, by giving free course to my groans. . . . My illness will neither leave me nor kill me. I entreat your holiness to pray for me, that I may be soon delivered, and receive that freedom which you know, and which is the glory of the children of God."[3] To a pious patrician lady, whom he forbade to call herself his servant, and who suffered from the same

Last letters of friendship and sadness.

[1] "Prægrande volumen."—JOAN DIAC., ii. 28. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "Ut cruciatum meum possim interrumpente gemitu tolerare. . . . In illam quam bene nostis libertatem gloriæ filiorum Dei."—*Epist.*, xi. 32.

malady: "My body," he said, "is wasted as if it was already in the coffin; I cannot leave my bed.[1] If gout can reduce to such a point the corpulent mass you have known me, how shall it fare with your always attenuated frame?"[2] And finally, to his former brother, the archbishop of Ravenna: "For a long time I have ceased to get up; sometimes I am tortured by the gout, sometimes a kind of burning pain spreads over all my body, and takes all courage from me. . . . I say, in a word, I am infected with this pernicious humour to such an extent, that life is a burden to me, and that I wait for and desire death as the sole remedy. Provided only that my sins, which these pangs ought to purify, be not aggravated by my murmurs!"[3]

His own suffering did not render him less attentive to the misery of his neighbour. From his bed of pain he wrote to the same Marinian, his old friend and companion in monastic life: "A man from Ravenna has plunged me into grief by telling me that you were attacked by blood-spitting. We have consulted all the physicians with the greatest care upon your case, and transmit to you what they say. Silence and repose are necessary to you above everything; you will scarcely find them in your metropolis. . . . You must come to me before the summer, in order that I, helpless though

[1] "Quem qualis fuerim nostis. . . . Si ergo mei molem corporis, . . . quid de vestro corpore sentiam, quod nimis siccum ante dolores fuit?" —*Epist.*, xi. 44.

[2] *Ibid.*, xi. 32.

I am, may specially watch your illness, and be the guardian of your repose, for the doctors say that the danger is specially great in summer. . . . It is very important that you should return to your church cured. And then for myself, who am so near death, if God call me before thee, I would die in thine arms. . . . If thou comest, come with few servants, for thou shalt lodge in my palace, and the people of this Church will serve thee."[1]

"It is fine," says one of our contemporaries who knows the secrets of sanctity and charity, "to see an existence so short and troubled suffice for such works. We love to find human weakness in great men. Antique heroism is made of marble and bronze; we admire, but we do not imitate it. But Christianity has put the souls of heroes in hearts of flesh. It destroys nothing of the innocent weakness of nature; it finds its strength there. We are not made of stone."[2]

Amid these insupportable sufferings, and up to his last moments, he continued with unwearied activity to dictate his correspondence, and to concern himself with the interests of the Church and of monasteries. One of his last epistles was to solicit the punishment of a soldier who had se-

[1] "Veniente quodam Ravennate homine. . . . Sollicite et singillatim eos quos hic doctos lectione novimus medicos tenuimus inquiri . . . ut . . . ego . . . in quantum valeo, quietem tuam custodiam. . . . Ipse valde sum debilis. . . . Inter tuas manus transire debeam . . . cum paucis tibi veniendum est, quia mecum in episcopio manens."—*Epist.*, xi. 33.

[2] OZANAM, unpublished fragment.

Dies. duced a nun.[1] He died on the 12th March 604, aged nearly fifty-five, in the thirteenth year of his pontificate. He was buried in St Peter's; and in the epitaph engraved on his tomb, it is said, that "after having conformed all his actions to his doctrine, the consul of God went to enjoy eternal triumph."[2]

Ingratitude of the Romans. He had, like so many other great hearts, to struggle with ingratitude, not only during his life, but after his death. If we may believe his biographer, Rome was afflicted with a great famine under his successor Sabinian, who put an end to the charities which Gregory had granted to the poor, on the plea that there was nothing remaining in the treasury of the Church. The enemies of the deceased pope then excited the people against him, calling him the prodigal and waster of Roman patrimony; and that ungrateful people, whom he had loved and helped so much, began to burn his writings, as if to annihilate or dishonour his memory. But one of the monks who had followed him from the monastery to the pontifical palace, his friend, the deacon Peter, interposed. He represented to the incendiaries that these writings were already spread through the entire world, and that it was, besides, sacrilege to burn the work of a holy doctor, upon whom he swore he had himself

[1] *Epist.*, xiv. 10.

[2] "Implebatque actu quidquid sermone docebat. . . .
Hisque, Dei consul factus, lætare triumphis,
Nam mercedem operum jam sine fine tenes."

seen the Holy Spirit hovering under the form of a dove.[1] And as if to confirm his oath, after having ended his address, he breathed forth his last sigh, a valiant witness of truth and friendship.[2]

He is avenged by posterity.

Posterity has sufficiently avenged Gregory of that wrong. In him it has recognised a man whose name stands out like a pharos in the night of the past. The highest personification of that papacy which neglected no exertions to save the East, and which vivified the West by delivering it from the Byzantine yoke, is found in him. The judgment of St Ildefonso, who was almost his contemporary, and who declared that he was greater than Anthony in sanctity, Cyprian in eloquence, and Augustine in knowledge, has been repeated by posterity.[3]

Bossuet has summed up his life with that terseness which includes everything, and which belongs only to himself. "This great pope . . . subdued the Lombards; saved Rome and Italy, though the emperors could give him no assistance; repressed the new-born pride of the patriarchs of Constantinople; enlightened the whole Church by his doctrine; governed the East and the West with as much vigour as humility; and gave to the world a perfect model of ecclesiastical government."

[1] Thence the custom, in art, during the middle ages, of always representing St Gregory with a dove whispering to him.

[2] "Confessor veritatis meruit sepeliri."—JOAN. DIAC., vi. 69. Compare PAUL. DIAC., *Vit. Greg.*, c. 24.

[3] *De Vir. Illustr.*, c. 1.

Let us, however, add and repeat, to justify ourselves for lingering thus upon his pontificate, that he was the restorer of monastic discipline, the protector, propagator, and legislator of the monks of the West; that he had nothing more at heart than the interests of monastic life; finally, that it was the Benedictine order which gave to the Church him whom no one would have hesitated to call the greatest of the popes, had not the same order, five centuries later, produced St Gregory VII.

His true grandeur.

The human race, in its weakness and folly, has always decreed the highest place in its admiration to conquerors, governors of nations, and masters of the world, who have done great things, but who have done them only by great means, with a frightful expense of men, money, and falsehood, trampling laws, morality, and sworn faith under foot. A detestable error, which renders the ignorant and innocent involuntary accomplices of all these startling crimes, the applauses of which they echo from one to the other. The merit of success is small when the conqueror shrinks at nothing, and recoils from no sacrifice of life, virtue, or truth. Even in its human aspect, supreme greatness is not there. That consists in working great results by small means, in triumphing over strength by weakness, and especially in surmounting obstacles and vanquishing adversaries with a respect for law, virtue, and truth. This is what

Gregory desired and what he accomplished. He is truly Gregory the Great, because he issued irreproachable from numberless and boundless difficulties; because he gave as a foundation to the increasing grandeur of the Holy See, the renown of his virtue, the candour of his innocence, the humble and inexhaustible tenderness of his heart.

III.—THE MONKS IN SPAIN.

We shall shortly be called upon to exhibit the all-powerful influence of St Gregory, as pope and monk, upon the great and celebrated island which owes to him its final conversion to the Christian faith; but at present it is fit that we should cast a glance upon another country, the destinies of the Church and monastic order in which are also connected, though less directly, with his memory. Let us cross Spain before we reach England.

During the time of his residence as nuncio at Constantinople, towards the year 580, Gregory, as has been seen, met with a Spanish monk called Leander, who was honoured by the double consecration of the bishopric and exile.

Spain conquered by the Arian Visigoths.

Spain, from the time of the great invasion of the Roman empire by the Germanic races, had been shared among the Sueves, Alans, and Vandals, and had finally fallen into the hands of the Visigoths, who had for two centuries established them-

selves there, and who were now, by union with the kingdom of the Sueves in 585, its sole masters. These Visigoths were considered the least barbarous of the Barbarians. They certainly could appreciate and respect better than the others the work of Roman and Christian civilisation, in those regions from whence Seneca and Lucan, Quintillian and Silius, had thrown so much lustre on the decline of Roman literature, and from whence, succeeding many illustrious martyrs, the Fathers of the Council of Elvira, such as the great bishop Osius, who presided at the Council of Nicæa, had honoured and consoled the Church in her decisive struggles against imperial persecution. But like all the Gothic race, like Theodoric and the other successors of Alaric, the Visigoths had received Christianity only through the channel of Arianism; through their means Spain was now overrun by it. This was the scourge from which she was delivered by the monk of Seville, the friend of Gregory.

Monastic beginnings in Spain.

However, before the time of Gregory and Leander, and even before St Benedict, Christian Spain had already become acquainted with the monastic order, and found in it a precious succour against the Arianism of her conquerors. Authorities are not agreed upon the precise date of its introduction into the Iberian peninsula.[1] According to some, it

[1] The work entitled, *Vindiciæ Antiquitatum Monasticarum Hispaniæ adv. Cæt. Cennium, Opera. D. Gabr. Mar.* SCARMALLII, *Abbat. SS. Flor. et Lucill*, Arrettii, 1752, may be consulted on this subject. Scar-

was the African St Donatus who, flying with seventy monks from the Barbarians, was received in Valentia by a noble lady called Minicea, and founded, with her help, the monastery of Servitanum, the most ancient in Spain.[1] It is certain that every province and canton had soon its monastery. The mountains which stretched from the Pyrenees towards the Ebro, in Biscay and Navarre, were peopled with hermits who gradually adopted a life in common, conforming generally to the rule of St Benedict. It was professed[2] by St Emilian, who was one of the most celebrated and popular monks of Spain. At first a shepherd in the mountains of La Rioja, in Aragon, he led his flocks to the wildest gorges, and, charming the solitude by the sounds of his guitar, learned to open his soul to celestial harmonies. He became a hermit, and lived thus for forty years; then he became a monk and abbot, and died a centenarian in 574, after having startled by his miracles and austerities the two nations, the Sueves and Visi- St Emilian. 574.

maglio even quotes a decree of the Council of Saragossa, in 381, which already made mention of the monks. *Dissert.* ii. c. 1, No. 5.

[1] From the acts of the Councils of 516 and 524, it is apparent that there had been monks in Spain before the middle of the sixth century, the time generally assigned to the coming of St Donatus. MABILL, *Præf. sæc.* 1. *Bened.*, n. 23 and 72; *Ann. Bened.*, lib. iii. c. 26-37; BULTEAU, t. i. pp. 305, 317. According to others, the most ancient monastery of Spain was Asane, near Huesca, in Aragon, founded about 506, and of which St Victorian was abbot for sixty years. Fortunatus says of him, in his epitaph—

"Plurima per patriam monachorum examina fundens,
Floribus æternis mellificavit apes."

[2] ACT. SS. O. B., *Præf. in sæc.* 1, § 74, and t. i. p. 197.

goths, who still disputed the possession of the country.[1]

The Sueves, who occupied the entire north-east of Spain, and who were much attached to Arianism, had for their apostle, at the same period, a monk named Martin, born in Hungary, like his famous namesake, St Martin of Tours. He introduced the rule of St Benedict into the regions which are now Galicia and the northern part of Portugal. He was himself the abbot of Dumes, at the gates of the metropolitan city of Braga, of which he became bishop, remaining at the same time abbot of his monastery.[2] By his writings, his virtues, and his influence, he led back the greater part of the Sueve nation to Catholic unity, at least for a time, and until the new persecution which preceded the great defeat of Arianism.

St Martin of Dumes.
580.

But the victory of orthodoxy was final, and the extension of the Benedictine order became a great fact for the Church and Spain, only under the pontificate of Gregory, and by the preponderating influence of an illustrious and holy family, the first glory of which was the monk-bishop Leander.

Born in that Andalusia where the Vandals had

[1] See his life by St Braulio, bishop of Saragossa in the seventh century, ap. ACT. SS. O. B., t. i. p. 197. "Minabat oves ad interiora montium. . . . Citharam vehebat, ne ad greges custodiam torpor impeditamentum." —*Ibid.*, p. 200. The monastery founded over his tomb, and called San Milan of Cogolla, became one of the most important in Spain.

[2] Dumes was erected into a bishopric in 562, and this St Martin died in 580. Gregory of Tours makes mention of him, *Hist.*, v. 38, and *De Mirac. S. Martini*, i. 11.

fortunately left only their name, Leander was the son of a duke, probably of Greco-Roman race,[1] but whose eldest daughter married Leuvigild, the king of the Visigoths. He embraced monastic life early, and drew from it that spirit of self-devotion and discipline, which gained him the honour of exercising supreme influence over the future destiny of his country. He was a monk at Seville itself, which had been up to that time the capital of the Visigoth kings, and of which he became metropolitan bishop in 579.[2] In that city which was considered the holy city, the Jerusalem of the south of Spain, he formed, under the shadow of his see, a school, which was designed to extend at once the orthodox faith and the study of all the arts and sciences.[3] He himself presided over the exercises of the learned masters and numerous pupils whom he attracted to it. Among these pupils were the two sons of the king, his own nephews, Hermenegild and Recarede. He succeeded in winning over from Arianism the elder of the two, and his example was followed by many others. Hermenegild was confirmed in the faith of Nicæa by his wife Ingonde, a French princess of the orthodox race of Clovis, the daughter of King Sige-

St Leander monk and bishop of Seville.

School of Seville.

[1] This is implied in his name, Severianus, and those of all his children: Leander, Isidore, Fulgentius, Theodora, Florentine. The Byzantine emperors had still some possessions in Spain.

[2] He was also bishop for some time of St Claude of Leon, in the north of Spain.—YEPES, *Cent. Secund.* Compare ACT. SS. O. B., t. i. p. 372.

[3] M. l'Abbé Bourret published in 1855 a remarkable thesis, entitled *L'Ecole Chrétienne de Séville sous la Monarchie des Visigoths.*

bert, and of the celebrated Brunehaut, who was herself the daughter of a king of the Visigoths. The young Ingonde resisted heroically the brutal violence which her mother-in-law employed to make her embrace Arianism, and gave thus to her husband an example of that constancy which was afterwards to lead him to martyrdom.

Leuvigild, in transferring the capital of the kingdom of the Visigoths from Seville to Toledo, had associated his eldest son with himself in the government, and assigned him Seville for his residence.

Persecution of the Catholics under Leuvigild.

But soon persecution arose, and with it civil war. Leuvigild shrank from no means of extending heresy; he gained over even some bishops, and condemned to prison or exile those who, like Leander, resisted his violence. He won about the same time the crown of the Sueves, a nation then scarcely restored to the orthodox faith, and carried persecution and all its terrors among them. The holy abbot Vincent was sacrificed, with twelve of his monks, before the door of his own monastery at Leon, for refusing to deny the divinity of the Son of God, as set forth in the Nicæan creed.[1] His tyranny respected civil liberty no more than liberty of conscience, and the Visigoth nobility no more than the conquered nations; he attacked by persecution, exile, and torture, all the most con-

[1] Yepes attributes this martyrdom to a king of the Sueves, and places it in the year 554; but Mabillon agrees with Baronius in fixing the date 584, and under the reign of Leuvigild. Compare ACT. SS. O. B., t. i. p. 287, and *Ann. Bened.*, lib. vii. c. 27.

siderable persons in his kingdom.[1] Leander, describing the state of his country under the yoke of the persecutor, says, that a man truly free was no longer to be seen, and that, by a just judgment of God, the soil itself, taken from its lawful proprietors, had lost its former fertility.[2] The unnatural father ended by besieging his son in Seville. The young king, made prisoner after a long resistance, and obliged to receive the communion from the hands of an Arian bishop, preferred to die, and was slain in his prison, on Easter eve of the year 586.

Martyrdom of Hermenegild. 586.

The monasteries which already existed in Spain naturally suffered much in that war. In one of these, dedicated to St Martin, and situated between Sagonte and Carthagena, the monks, on the approach of the royal army, abandoned their old abbot and took flight, with the intention of concealing themselves in an island of the sea. The Goths arrived, and sacked the defenceless monastery, where they found the abbot alone, bowed down by age, but *kept erect by virtue*, as says Gregory of Tours, to whom we owe the tale. One of them drew his sword to kill

The monastery of St Martin.

[1] "Exstitit et quibusdam suarum perniciosus. Nam vi cupiditatis et livoris, quoscumque potentes ac nobiles vidit, aut capite damnavit, aut opibus ablatis proscripsit."—S. ISIDORI, *Chronic.*, era 608. The holy historian adds that he was the first among the Visigoth kings who affected to sit on a throne, and to wear a royal mantle. "Nam ante eum et habitus et consessus omnis ut genti, ita et regibus erat."—*Ibid.*

[2] "Ego expertus loquor, sic perdidisset statum et speciem illam patriam, ut nec liber quisquam circa supersit, nec terra ipsa solita sit ubertate fecunda, et non sine Dei judicio. Terra enim cui cives erepti sunt et concessa extraneo, mox ut dignitatem perdidit, caruit et feconditate."—S. LEANDR., *De Instit. Virgin.*, c. ult.

the abbot, but, as he was about to strike, fell back and died. At this sight the others fled. Leuvigild himself, when informed of the fact, was touched by it, and ordered the restitution of everything that had been taken from the monastery, thus saved by the courage and sanctity of the old abbot.[1]

Leander, exiled at Constantinople, meets St Gregory there.

It was during this struggle between father and son, which lasted several years, and before he was himself exiled, that Leander was sent by Hermenegild to Constantinople, to claim the aid of the Byzantine emperors, who had still retained some possessions in Spain, with their garrisons. It was there that the monk-bishop, the envoy of a princely martyr to orthodoxy, met that other monk set apart for the highest destiny, and that one of these tender and strong friendships of which it is pleasant to find so many examples in the lives of the saints, was formed between Gregory and Leander. The brotherly entreaties of Leander induced the holy doctor to undertake the greatest of his works, the Commentary upon Job, which is also called the *Moralia* of St Gregory. The intimate and lasting tenderness which united these two great men, and which continued through the premature infirmities of which both were victims,[2] shines through various portions of the correspondence of Gregory, and dic-

Their tender friendship.

[1] "Cum exercitus . . . ut assolet, graviter loca sancta concuteret. . . . Abbatem senio incurvatum sed sanctitate erectum."—GREG. TUR., *De Glor. Confess.*, c. 12.

[2] "De podagræ vero molestia Sanctitas Vestra . . . affligetur, cujus dolore assiduo et ipse vehementer attritus sum."—S. GREG. *Ep.*, ix. 121.

tated to him those accents which breathe across so many intervening centuries the immortal perfume of real love. "Absent in the body," wrote the pope to his friend, "you are always present to my eyes, for I bear your lineaments graven on my heart. . . . You can read in your own heart what an ardent thirst I have to see you, for you love me sufficiently for that. . . . What a cruel distance separates us! I send you my books. Read them with care, and then weep over my sins, since I appear to know so well that which I do so ill. My letter is very short; it will show you how much I am overwhelmed by the business and storms of my Church since I write so briefly to him I love most in the world."[1] And later, "I have received your letter, written with the pen of charity. It is in your heart that you have dipped your pen. The wise and worthy men who have heard it read, have been at once moved to the depth of their hearts. Each of them offered you the hand of love; they seemed not only to have heard you, but to see you with the gentleness of your soul. They were all inspired with admiration, and that flame lighted in your hearers demonstrated your own; for no man can light the sacred fire in others without being himself consumed by it."[2]

[1] "Quam absentem corpore, præsentem mihi te semper intueor, quia vultus tui imaginem intra cordis viscera impressam porto."—*Epist.*, i. 41. "Quanto ardore videre te sitiam, quia valde me diligis, in tui tabulis cordis leges . . . quando ei parum loquor quem magis omnibus diligo."—*Ib.*, v. 49.

[2] "Solius charitatis calamo scriptam. Ex corde enim lingua tinxerat

However, the excess of evil hastened its end, and the Church was about to attain a sudden and complete triumph. The tyrant Leuvigild, the parricide-king,[1] struck by a mortal sickness, was seized with remorse; upon his deathbed he ordained the recall of Leander, and gave him as a guide to his son and successor Recarede, recommending the latter to embrace the Catholic faith. The new king, who had been, like his brother, the pupil of Leander, hastened to obey. He became a Catholic immediately, and undertook the conversion of his people. After long controversies with the Arian clergy, he succeeded in overcoming all resistance, but by discussion, and not by force.[2] Four years after his accession to the throne, having confirmed his reign by brilliant victories over the Franks, he proclaimed, at the third Council of Toledo, the abjuration of Arianism by the united nation of Goths and Sueves. The king there declared that the illustrious nation of Goths, separated up to that time by the perversity of its doctors from the universal Church, returned to unity, and demanded to be instructed in orthodox Catholic doctrine. He placed in the hands of the bishops his profession of faith, written by his

Conversion of Recarede and the Visigoth nation.

589.

quod in chartæ pagina refundebat. . . . Nisi enim prius in se faces ardeant, alium non succendunt."—*Epist.*, ix. 121.

[1] "Pater vero perfidus et parricida."—S. GREG., *loc. cit.*

[2] "Sacerdotes sectæ Arianæ sapienti colloquio aggressus, ratione potius quam imperio converti ad Catholicam fidem facit, gentemque omnium Gothorum ac Suevorum ad unitatem et pacem revocat Ecclesiæ Christianæ."—JOANNIS *abbatis* BICLARENSIS *Chronic.*, ap. *Hispania Illustr.*, 1068, t. iv. p. 137.

own hand, along with that of eight Arian bishops, of his nobility, and of all his people.

Leander, in his capacity of pope's legate, naturally presided at this great assembly, in which sat seventy-eight bishops, and the deliberations of which were eminently assisted by another monk, Eutropius, abbot of that monastery of Servitanum, which was considered the most ancient in Spain.[1] A third monk, John, who had been exiled like Leander, and had consoled his exile by founding a great monastery under the rule of St Benedict in Catalonia, recorded the great transformation of which he was witness in a chronicle by which the series of monastic historians was begun in Spain.[2]

Thus was accomplished in the Peninsula, under the auspices of a great pope and a great bishop, both monks and close friends, the triumph of that orthodoxy which found for ten centuries a true champion in the Spanish nation, where, even amid decay and downfall, its instinct and tradition are still preserved.

Connection of Recaredo with Gregory.

Leander hastened to announce the triumph of truth, and the thorough conversion of the king, his nephew, to Gregory, who showed himself always affectionately interested in the new conquests of the

[1] "Summa tamen synodalis negotii penes sanctum Leandrum . . . et beatissimum Eutropium monasterii Servitani abbatem fuit."—JOANNIS *abbatis* BICLARENSIS *Chronic.*, ap. *Hispania Illustr.*, 1608, t. iv. p. 137.

[2] S. ISIDORI, *De Script. Eccl.*; MARIANA, *De Reb. Hispan.*, lib. v. c. 13. See the letter from the Bishop of Barcelona, respecting the site of this monastery of Biclara or Vilclara, in MABILLON, *Ann. Bened.*, lib. iii. c. 35.

Church. He recommended Leander to watch attentively over the soul of the prince, lest pride and impurity should come to stain his young orthodoxy. Recarede entered into direct correspondence with the pope; in order to render himself more agreeable to a pontiff, who had learnt in the cloister how to govern the Church, he took for his representatives abbots chosen with care from the Spanish monasteries,[1] to whom he intrusted the presents which he intended for Gregory. But they were shipwrecked and lost everything upon rocks near Marseilles. Recarede was not discouraged, and afterwards sent a golden chalice to the pope, with a letter in semi-barbarous Latin, but full of heart. He entreated the pope, who wrote to so many, to write to him also, and added, "Those who are divided by earth and sea, the grace of Jesus Christ seems often to attract to each other; those who have never seen you rejoice in your fame. Never forget to recommend us to God, I and my people, whom you have seen in your own time gained to Christ: the breadth of the world separates us, but may charity unite us!"[2] Like the Frank kings, Recarede afterwards desired the good offices of the pope with the Byzantine court, in which all the barbarian princes always saw a reflection of ancient Roman grandeur. Gregory on

[1] "Ex monasteriis abbates elegimus."—*Apud* S. GREG., *Epist.*, ix. 61.

[2] "Nonnunquam solet ut quos spatia terrarum sive maria dividunt, Christi gratia ceu visibiliter glutinare. . . . Nos gentesque nostras . . . quæ vestris sunt a Christi acquisita temporibus . . . ut . . . quos orbis latitudo dissociat . . . vera charitas convalescat."

his side responded to him with affection and in detail: he insisted upon the conditions of eternal salvation, warned him especially against temptations to pride and anger, and proved that the conversion of his people could not have a better guarantee than the humility of his soul and the purity of his life.[1] He sent this answer by his friend the abbot Cyriac, whom he calls the "father of our monastery,"[2] and whom he made his legate in Spain, confiding to him the care of proceeding against simony and the intrusion of laymen into the episcopate, as he had already done in France. He sent the pallium on the same occasion to Leander, who preceded his friend to the tomb by some years, dying at the same time as King Recarede in 601. Spain has always honoured in him her doctor and apostle, the principal instrument of her return to Catholic unity.[3]

Leander and his monastic family.

All his family were associated in this work. His father and mother had been, like himself, exiled for the faith, and died in that exile. His brother Fulgentius, a bishop like himself, shared his combats and his victory. His sister Florentine, embracing monastic life, became the superior of forty convents and a thousand nuns, and by her knowledge, her virtue, and even by her sacred songs, was worthy of

[1] *Epist.*, ix. 122.

[2] "Monasterii nostri patrem."—*Ibid.*, ix. 120.

[3] "Adeo ut non immerito eum colant Hispani tanquam gentis suæ doctorem et apostolum, cui potissimum debet Hispania quod et rectam fidem et Catholicos habeat reges."—D'ACHERY, *Act. SS. O. B.*, t. i. p. 376.

taking her place at the head of all the illustrious nuns whom the country of St Theresa has given to the Church.[1] Leander, who loved her tenderly, wrote for her use a special rule.[2]

Rule given by Leander to his sister Florentine.

"I have considered," he says to her in the preamble of this rule, "dearest sister, what wealth or patrimony I could leave to thee; many fallacious things have occurred to my mind, which I have driven away as troublesome flies are brushed away by the hand. Of all that I have seen under the sun, there is nothing worthy of thee. It is above the skies that we must seek the true wealth, the gift of holy virginity. . . . I am not capable, beloved sister, of extolling it enough. It is an ineffable and hidden gift. What all the saints hope one day to be, what the entire Church expects to become after the resurrection, you are already. . . . You are the fine flour of the body of the Church, and her purest leaven; you are the offering already accepted by God, and consecrated upon his celestial altars.[3] Christ is already thy spouse, thy father, thy friend, thy inheritance, thy ransom, thy Lord and thy God."

He warns her against all intimacy with lay women, whom he calls syrens and instruments of Satan.[4]

[1] She died in 603.

[2] *De Institutione Virginum et Contemptu Mundi*, divided into twenty-one chapters.

[3] "Perquirenti mihi, soror carissima, . . . multæ rerum fallacium occurrebant imagines, quas cum ut importunas muscas manu mentis abigerem. . . . Vos estis prima delibatio corporis Ecclesiæ: vos ex tota corporis massa oblationes."—*Præf. Regul.*

[4] *Cap.* 1.

He condemns the error of those who believed they could consecrate their virginity to God without shutting themselves up in a monastery, by remaining in their families or in isolated cells, in the midst of cities, among all the cares of domestic life.[1] He affirms that regular monastic life is identically conformed to that which was led by the Apostles. He reminds that daughter of a noble race, that sister and aunt of Visigoth kings, of the obligations imposed upon her by Christian equality, and directs her to regard as her equals even the slaves who, like her, had assumed the veil. "Their birth made them slaves, their profession has made them thy sisters. Let nothing remind them of their ancient servitude. She who combats by thy side for Christ under the banner of virginity should enjoy a liberty equal to thine. In accepting them for thy sisters, thou shalt have them so much the more for servants, that they will obey thee not by the obligation of servitude, but by the freedom of charity. Not that your humility should tempt them to pride. Charity tempers everything, and will conduct you all to the frontier of the same peace, without exalting her who has sacrificed power, and without humiliating her who was born poor or enslaved."[2] It is pleasant to find in that great mind the indications of fraternal affection and domestic recollections. "Seek not," said he, playing upon the name of their mother Turtur, who had also ended her days in the cloister, "to

[1] *Cap.* 17. [2] *Cap.* 12 and 13.

steal away from the roof where the turtle lays her little ones. Thou art the daughter of innocence and candour, thou who hast had the turtle-dove for thy mother. But love still more the Church, that other mystic turtle-dove, who travails with thee every day for Jesus Christ. Repose thy old age on her bosom, as thou sleptst of old upon the heart of her who cared for thy infancy.[1] . . . Ah, well-beloved sister, understand the ardent desire which inspires the heart of thy brother to see thee with Christ. . . . Thou art the better part of myself. Woe to me if another take thy crown! Thou art my bulwark with Christ, my cherished pledge, my holy Host, through whom I shall be worthy to issue out of the abyss of my sins."[2]

His brother Isidore.

Florentine had yet another brother younger, but not less illustrious than Leander, who loved her as much, since he has dedicated to her one of the greatest monuments of his genius.[3] Isidore was the last born of that high-destined family. Before succeeding Leander upon the metropolitan see of Seville, he was the pupil of his elder brother, who loved him like a son, but who used him with so much severity that the young Isidore, fearing

[1] "Simplicitatis filia es quæ turture matre nata es. Turturem pro matre respice. Turturem pro magistra attende, et quæ te Christo quotidie affectibus generat, chariorem qua nata es matrem reputa . . . sit tibi dulce ejus gremium provectæ quod erat infantis gratissimum."—*Cap.* 21.

[2] "Senti fratris concupiscentiam velle te esse cum Christo. . . . Tu quæ pars melior nostri es corporis. . . . Tu apud Christum tutamen meum, tu, charissima, meum pignus."—*Præfat.*

[3] His treatise *De Fide Catholica.*

the energetic and frequent corrections of his brother,[1] fled one day from the school at Seville. After having wandered for some time through the country exhausted by thirst and fatigue, the child seated himself near a well, and looked with curiosity at the hollows worn in its edge. He asked himself who had done that, when a woman who came to draw water from the well, and who was greatly struck with the beauty and humble innocence of the scholar, explained to him that the drops of water falling incessantly on the same spot had hollowed the stone. Then the child returned into himself, and thought, that if the hard stone was hollowed thus drop by drop by the water, his mind would also yield to the print of instruction.[2] He returned accordingly to his brother, and completed his education so well, that he was shortly master of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and became the active fellow-labourer of Leander in the work of Arian conversion.

Action of Isidore upon the order in Spain.

He lived long in a cell where his brother kept him shut up to prevent him from wandering, giving him the most learned masters of the time. It is not absolutely proved that he was a monk, though many have maintained it. But it is diffi-

[1] "Non parcebat virgis, et laudatus est in illo. . . . Puerili permotus timore, verbera magistri metuens."—LUCAS TUDENSIS, *Vit. S. Isid.*, ap. BOLLAND., t. i. *Apr.*, p. 331.

[2] "Aspexit prægrande saxum tortuosis foraminibus perforatum. . . . Mulier super pulchritudine pueri admodum mirata. . . . Quis vel ad quid lapidis hujus foramina. . . . Et si lapis durissimus mollis aquæ frequenti instillatione cavatur, quanto magis ego homo!"—*Ibid.*

cult to doubt it when we read the Rule which he wrote, in twenty-three chapters, for the use of the Religious of his own country, and which is little more than an extract of the Benedictine Rule, with which his brother Leander had made him familiar.

His monastic writings.

Curious details upon the means by which the order recruited its ranks from the most various classes, and the lowest conditions of life, are to be found here, as in another of his works upon the *Duty of the Monks*. This information is communicated to us in wise and noble words, which breathe, with more precision and eloquence than anywhere else, the doctrine of the equality of souls before God and the Church, but where we also perceive the curb imposed by justice and reason on the pride of the newly emancipated. "Our holy army," says Isidore, "fills up its ranks not only with freemen, but especially with those of servile condition, who come to seek freedom in the cloister. Men come also from rustic life, from laborious professions, from plebeian labours, and with so much more advantage as they are better inured to labour. It would be a serious fault not to admit them." "We must not inquire," he adds, "whether the novice be rich or poor, bond or free, young or old; neither age nor condition matters among monks; for God has made no difference between the soul of the slave and that of the free man. . . . Many plebeians have exhibited brilliant virtues, and are worthy to be raised above nobles. . . . But let not those who

Equality in the cloister.

come out of poverty to enter the cloister swell with pride to see themselves the equals of those who appeared to be something in the world. It would be an unworthy thing if, where the rich, giving up all worldly splendour, descend to humility, the poor should allow themselves to rise into arrogance. They ought, on the contrary, to put aside all vanity, to understand humbly their new position, and never to forget their former poverty."[1]

Monk or not, Isidore distinguished himself by his zeal for monastic interests when on the death of Leander he became bishop of Seville, and the oracle of the Spanish Church.[2] He presided at that Council of Seville which, in 619, pronounced the anathema against bishops or priests who should attempt to disturb or despoil the monasteries.[3]

Services rendered by him to the Church and to Spain.

During the forty years of his episcopate, his knowledge, zeal, and authority consolidated the happy revolution and religious and literary revival of which his brother had been the chief author.

[1] "Veniunt non solum liberi, sed plerumque ex conditione servili vel propter hoc potius liberandi. Veniunt quoque ex vita rustica, et ex opificum exercitatione, . . . et ex plebeio labore, tanto utique felicius, quanto fortius educati."—S. ISIDORI, *De Offic. Eccles.*, c. 15; *De Monach.*, c. 5. "Quia inter servi et liberi animam nulla est apud Deum differentia. . . . Non extollantur in superbiam, quia se ibi æquales aspiciunt iis qui aliquid in sæculo videbantur."—*Regula*, c. 4. Finally Isidore prohibited, in his rule, the reception into the monastery of slaves whom their masters had not set free.

[2] Compare BOLLAND., loc. c., and MABILLON, *Act. SS. O. B. sæc.* ii. *in Prætermissis.* "Monastici quoque instituti per Hispaniam promotor, et amplificator eximius, plura construxit monasteria."—*Offic. Sanctorum in Brev. Rom. ad usum Hispaniæ.* Matr. 1678, die 4 April.

[3] *Can.* x.; ap. COLETTI, *Concil.*, t. v. p. 1407.

He completed the destruction of Arianism, stifled the new heresy of the *Acephales*, continued, strengthened, and enriched the vast educational work of which Seville was the centre, and which, by means of the fourth Council of Toledo, he extended to all the Episcopal Churches of Spain, prescribing everywhere the study of Greek and Hebrew. He was, besides, the compiler of that Spanish liturgy so poetic and imposing, which, under the name of Mozarabic, survived the ruin of the Visigoth Church, and was worthy of being resuscitated by the great Ximenes.

A fertile writer, unwearied and profoundly learned, he wrote, among many other works, a history of the Goths, their conquests and government in Spain. He made Aristotle known to the new nations of the West long before the Arabs came to bring him again into fashion. He has preserved to us a multitude of classical fragments which without his care would have perished for ever, by condensing all the knowledge of antiquity and of his own time, the seven liberal arts, philological tradition, medicine, law, natural history, geography, and even the mechanical arts, in that vast encyclopedia which, under the name of a treatise on *Etymology* or on *The Origin of Things*, was, with the analogous work of the monk Cassiodorus, the school manual of the middle ages.[1] It has been said of him with justice that he was the last philosopher of the ancient

[1] OZANAM, *La Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Francs*, c. 9.

world,[1] and the first Christian who arranged for Christians the knowledge of antiquity.

Isidore died in 636; but the light which he had thrown in floods upon Spain and the Church was not extinguished with him. He had numerous disciples, of whom St Ildefonso was the most illustrious, but among whom we must name, in passing, Braulius, bishop of Saragossa, who has been characterised as the most eloquent writer of Gothic Spain; and King Sisebut, a learned prince, who had a double merit, according to a Benedictine historian, in his love for literature, as being at once a king and a Goth.[2]

He dies. 636.

St Braulius

Most of the Visigoth kings distinguished themselves by their liberality towards monasteries. The only authentic charter which remains of the Visigothic period, is a donation made in 646, by King Chindaswinde, to the monastery of Compludo. This charter is signed by the king, by the queen Reciberga, by St Eugene, archbishop of Toledo, and two other bishops, by five counts, and four abbots, among whom we remark the name of Ildefonso, destined to the highest honour.[3] But the great number of similar donations is proved by the general and official formula on which these acts were modelled, and which French erudition has lately brought to light.

Visigothic form for monastic foundations.

[1] CUVIER.

[2] "Lo que es mucho para aquello tiempo que siendo Rey et Godo, se aplicava las letras."—YEPES, *Cent. Secund.*, p. 48.

[3] YEPES, *Coronica General del Orden de S. Benoît*, vol. ii. p. 174, and *Append.*, *Escritura* 13.

The king who would found or endow a community addressed himself to the saint whose relics were to be placed in the new church, and spoke a language which seems to make even these legal forms palpitate with the ardent breath of Spanish faith. "Glorious lord and happy conqueror," he is made to say, "we have decreed that henceforth, in the place where the treasure of your sacred body reposes, there should be a congregation of monks, destined to serve God and honour your memory, according to the custom of the Fathers, who have established the rule of monastic life. We offer to your glorious memory such and such a portion of our patrimony to support the church and its light, its incense and its sacrifices, to supply the regulated food and clothing of the monks, the help of the poor, and that travellers may be received there. . . . We will that this donation, made to efface our sins, should be perpetual; that neither priest nor prelate may have power to alienate it. We warn future abbots, in centuries to come, not to dissolve, by carelessness or irregularity, the bond which we here form. And you who shall reign after us, we adjure you by the empire of the eternal God (and may God deign to preserve the nation and kingdom of the Goths to the end of the world!) take heed that nothing is taken away or mutilated in these oblations, by which we would propitiate God for our own salvation, and that of all the Goths! Glorious martyr, accept this

gift, and present it before God."[1] In this formula, as in the charter of Compludo, appear already those formidable imprecations so universal during the middle ages, against the violators and robbers of holy things, which threaten them with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, and which assign them a place in hell beside Dathan, Abiram, and Judas Iscariot.

The development of the monastic institution kept pace with that of literature and Christian piety, under the influence of the great doctors produced by monastic life in Spain. St Ildefonso, who signed the charter of Compludo, in whom Leander and Isidore seemed to live again, and who was the most popular of the Spanish saints, issued like them from the famous school of Seville: but he was also connected with another centre of knowledge and ecclesiastical education created by the monastic spirit. At the gates of Toledo, which, since the union of the whole territory of Spain under the sceptre of the Visigoth kings, had replaced Seville as the capital of the Visigoth kingdom, rose the monastery of Agali, founded in the sixth century. In the following age, it was a nursery of saints and doctors, and the most celebrated abbey of the Penin-

School of Toledo.

Abbey of Agali.

[1] "*Formula quam facit rex qui Ecclesiam ædificans monasterium facere voluerit.*—Domino glorioso et triumphatori beatissimo. . . . Juxta Patrum more (*sic*) qui monachis normam vitæ posuerunt. . . . Per ætates succiduas futuros præmonemus abbates. . . . Per æterni regis imperium (sic Deus Gothorum gentem et regnum usque in finem sæculi conservare dignetur!) . . ."—E. DE ROZIÈRE, *Formules Visigothiques Inédites*, No. 9, 1854.

sula. Six metropolitan bishops of Toledo[1] came from it in succession, and among them Helladius, a young lord of the first nobility, the friend and fellow-student of Leander, who, like him, early renounced the world, and had lived long at Agali, in companionship with the Religious, and was pleased to be employed in carrying fagots to the abbatial oven,[2] before he himself became a monk. When he became bishop after having been abbot of the monastery, he instituted the great school which his successors vied with each other in developing.

St Ildefonso, monk of Agali, bishop of Toledo.

Ildefonso, born at Toledo, of a family allied to the blood-royal, received at first in Seville, for twelve years, the instructions of Isidore, and then, returning to his own birth-place, despite the violent opposition of his family, became a monk at Agali. Another kind of violence, that of the unanimous voice of the people and clergy of Toledo, was needed to draw him from thence, and place him upon the metropolitan see. He too cultivated history and poetry with success; his ascetic writings take an honourable place in the religious literature of the time. But it was his ardent devotion to the holy

[1] Aurasius, died in 614; Helladius, died in 632; St Just, who presided with St Isidore at the fourth Council of Toledo, died in 635; Eugène II., a monk from infancy, presided at the fifth, sixth, and seventh Councils of Toledo, and died in 646; Eugène III., who was the most distinguished poet of Gothic Spain (v. BOURRET, *op. citat.*) presided at the eighth, ninth, and tenth Councils of Toledo, and died in 658; lastly, Ildefonso, nephew of the preceding, died in 667. The three first and Ildefonso were not only monks, but abbots of Agali.

[2] S. HILDEPHONS., *De Virib. Illustr.*, c. 7.

Virgin, whose perpetual virginity he defended against the heresy of the Helvidians, which gained him the first place in the love and memory of the Spanish people. The miraculous visions which testified the gratitude of Mary for the efforts of his defending zeal,[1] and the relics of them which he left to the church of Toledo, after having warmed the devotion of the Spaniards for their great saint *Alonzo*, received, a thousand years after his death, a new consecration from the genius of Calderon.[2]

The most popular of Spanish saints.

Leander, Isidore, and Ildefonso were the illustrious representatives of intellectual life in a time from which it had almost everywhere disappeared. These laborious, learned, and eloquent ecclesiastics, full of zeal for knowledge and study, as well as for religion, secured in Spain the future existence of Christian literature and literary traditions, which were everywhere else interrupted, or threatened by the storms of invasion, and the establishment of the Barbarians. They made their country the intellectual light of the Christian world in the seventh century.

[1] During the night of the feast of the *Expectatio Partus B. M. V.*, St Leocadia, whose relics he had discovered, appeared to him and said, "O Ildefonse! per te vivit Domina mea, quæ cœli culmina tenet." In order to secure a palpable token of this vision, he seized the sword of King Receswinth, who accompanied him, and cut off a portion of the veil of the saint, which afterwards became a much venerated relic.—*Breviar. Roman. in prop. Cleri Romani, ad* 23 *Januar.* Another night, he saw the holy Virgin herself seated on the episcopal throne, in the apse of his cathedral, which was illuminated by that presence, and on which he never afterwards ventured to seat himself.

[2] See the drama, by Calderon, entitled *La Virgen del Sacrario.*

After them come all the admirable bishops and monks, issued from the blood or spiritual family of these three great men, who were, as they themselves had been, the soul of the famous Councils of Toledo. It is well known that these councils were the strength and glory of Gothic Spain; and that out of their bosom came, purified by the sacerdotal spirit, that Visigothic legislation which modern knowledge has nobly vindicated,[1] and placed in the first rank of the laws of ancient Christendom, for the boldness, depth, and equity of its views.

The Councils of Toledo and their canons.

Leander and Isidore, the two illustrious brothers, gave to these assemblies the political and legislative character which they retained for a century, and which has fixed upon them the special attention of historians.[2] Doubtless, in the eighteen assemblies

[1] GUIZOT, *Hist. de la Civilisation*, vol. i.; *Hist. des Origines du Gouvernement Représentatif*, leç. 25; and *Revue Française* of November 1828.

[2] The following is the chronological list of the Councils which were held at Toledo from the conversion of the Visigoths to the conquest of Spain by the Moors. (Those numbered First and Second are previous, and date, the first 400, and the second 531.)

The Third, in 589, composed of 65 bishops, presided over by Leander, published 23 decrees or canons.

Two Councils held in 597 and 610, the decrees of which were first published by Garcia Loasia in the sixteenth century, have not been comprised in the ordinary numeration, so as not to disarrange the traditional order.

The Fourth, in 633: 62 bishops; 75 canons. St Isidore signs first.

The Fifth, in 636: 20 bishops; 9 canons.

The Sixth, in 638: 52 bishops; 19 canons.

The Seventh, in 646: 28 bishops; 6 canons.

The Eighth, in 653: 52 bishops; 10 abbots, among whom was Ildefonso, abbot of Agali; 12 canons.

The Ninth, in 655: 16 bishops; 6 abbots, among them Ildefonso; 17 canons.

held at Toledo, from the conversion of the Visigoths to the conquest of Spain by the Moors, religious matters always occupied the first place. Questions touching doctrine, ecclesiastical hierarchy, and discipline, the independence and regularity of monasteries,[1] the general and detailed aspect of spiritual interests, formed the subject of most of the decisions issued by these Councils. Doubtless, also, the bishops played a preponderating part, by number as by authority. But lords and lay dignitaries figured there also: entering the first time with the king, who almost always took the initiative as regards questions which were to be dealt with, these laymen withdrew with him; but after

The Tenth, in 656: 20 bishops, among them the monk St Fructueux, archbishop of Braga, of whom we shall speak hereafter; 7 canons.

The Eleventh, in 675: 19 bishops, 6 abbots; 16 canons.

The Twelfth, in 681: 35 bishops, 4 abbots; 13 canons.

The Thirteenth, in 683: 48 bishops, 5 abbots; 13 canons.

The Fourteenth, in 684: 17 bishops, 6 abbots; 12 canons.

The Fifteenth, in 688: 61 bishops, 8 abbots.

The Sixteenth, in 693: 59 bishops, 5 abbots; 13 canons.

The Seventeenth, in 694: 8 canons; no signatures.

The Eighteenth, and last: in 701.

Many of these bishops proceeded from the monastic order, or ended their days in it.—YEPES, *Cent. Secund.* This collection includes, besides, the signatures of proxies of absent bishops, and those of a crowd of counts and lay *proceres*.

[1] The Fourth, held in 633, under the presidency of Isidore, showed itself especially zealous for the liberty of the monks, guaranteeing to priests the liberty of embracing monastic life, interdicting bishops from all molestation or usurpation injurious to the monasteries, and prohibiting the return to the world of all *professed* monks.

The Ninth, held in 655, saw the necessity of putting a curb on the munificence of bishops towards monasteries, by prohibiting them from disposing of more than a fiftieth of the episcopal patrimony in favour of these foundations.

Preponderating part of the bishops, but salutary intervention of laymen.

having left the bishops three days to discuss spiritual affairs alone, they returned to take part in the final deliberations. They were there by virtue of a recognised right: they signed the decrees like the bishops. Besides, the consent of what was then called the people—that is, of all the military nobility of the Gothic nation—seems to have been often asked and expressed to give validity to the decisions of the king, the bishops, and the *proceres*.[1]

Decrees and doctrines on the subject of the Crown.

Thus constituted, these memorable assemblies exercised power, spiritual and temporal, political and civil, legislative and judiciary, in all its fulness: all the great affairs of the kingdom were discussed there; and this kingdom embraced not only the whole of Spain, which the Visigoths had succeeded in purging from the last vestiges of Greco-Roman power, but also the Narbonnaise, the bishops of which took their places at Toledo with those of the Peninsula. They made laws and kings. They regulated the conditions of the elective monarchy, too often ignored in practice by the sanguinary violence of pretenders, or of successors designated to the throne. And although the accomplished acts which they found it best to sanction had too often substituted violence for right, they always condemned in principle every candi-

[1] See Councils Eighth, Fourteenth, Sixteenth, but especially the canon of the Fourth, in 633, which renders valid the deposition of Swinthila, *after having taken the advice of the nation.*

date whose claims were not founded on an election by the nobility and clergy, upon the purity of his Gothic origin, and the uprightness of his character.[1]

After having established that the king was only the representative and delegate of the people, they seem to have accorded to him a kind of counter-advantage, by attributing to his authority a fulness which contrasts with the limitations imposed upon their princes by the traditional freedom of the Germanic races, who were best acquainted with the means of recognising at once the rights of blood, and restraining the exercise of power. But never, it must be acknowledged, has the sovereign power been addressed in language more noble than that of the fourth Council of Toledo, speaking by the mouth of Isidore and his colleagues to King Sisenand and his successors. "You who are actually king, and all you, the princes of the future, we humbly adjure you to be gentle and moderate towards your subjects, to govern with justice and piety the nations which God has confided to you, and thus to pay your debt to Christ who has made you kings. Let none among you decide by himself in causes which concern life

[1] "Defuncto in pace principe, primates totius gentis cum sacerdotibus successorem regni communi concilio constituant."—*Conc.* iv. *can.* 74. "Quem nec electio omnium provehit, nec Gothicæ gentis nobilitas ad hunc honoris apicem trahit, sit . . . anathemati condemnatus."—*Conc.* v. *can.* 3. "Nullus sub religionis habitu detonsus . . . servilem originem trahens, vel extraneæ gentis homo, nisi genere et moribus dignus."—*Conc.* xvi. *can.* 17.

or property, but let the crime of the accused be proved in a public sitting with the chiefs of the people, and by an open judgment. Be gentle even in your severity: by means of such moderation the kings will be content with the people, the people with the kings, and God with both. As for the future kings, this is the sentence we publish concerning them. If any one among them, in opposition to the laws, for pride or royal pomp, or covetousness, oppresses or vexes his people, may he be accursed by the Lord Christ, and for ever separated from God!"[1]

But the kings, who listened humbly to such lessons, practised them little. The councils were not the less obliged to interfere energetically in order to repress the rapacity of the kings and the subaltern insolence of certain officers drawn by them from the servile classes. "When," said the Fathers of the eighth council, held in 653, at which the monk Eugenius presided as bishop of Toledo, and where Ildefonso already sat as abbot of Agali, "when in time past the frightful avidity of the princes has thrown itself upon the goods of the people, and wildly sought to increase its wealth by the tears of its subjects, we have been inspired by a breath from on high, after having granted to the

[1] "Te quoque præsentem regem futurosque sequentium ætatum principes. . . . Ne quisquam vestrum solus in caussis capitum aut rerum sententiam ferat, sed consensu publico cum rectoribus. . . . Si quis ex eis contra reverentiam legum superba dominatione et fastu regio . . . crudelissimam potestatem in populo exercuerit."—*Conc.* iv. *can.* 75.

subjects laws of respectful obedience, to put a check also upon the excesses of the princes."[1] And the Fathers of the thirteenth council, in 683, decreed as follows: "We know that many slaves and freedmen, raised by order of the king to palatine offices, and affecting to arrogate to themselves a power which the baseness of their origin interdicts, having become by their new dignity the equals of their lords, have made themselves the murderers of their former masters, even of those who gave them their freedom. Therefore, from this time, we debar any serf or freedman (except those of the treasury) from admission into a palatine office."[2]

Unhappily, the efforts of these assemblies to restrain the excesses of the princes and their servants lacked, like those of the nobles and clergy, a lasting guarantee and sanction. The Goths of Spain, permitting the Roman spirit and manners to gain too rapid a sway over them, gradually lost the traditions of Germanic institutions and liberties. Unaccustomed to those assemblies of free men and that practice of military virtue which were always kept up among the Franks, they knew no way of establishing the necessary counterpoise to the violence of the kings, which ended

[1] "Cum immoderatior aviditas principum sese prona diffunderet in spoliis populorum . . . nobis est divinitus inspiratum ut, quia subjectis leges reverentiæ dederamus, principum quoque excessus retinaculum temperantiæ poneremus."—*Concil.* viii., ap. COLETTI, t. viii. p. 428.

[2] *Concil.* iii. *Tolet.*, can. 6, ap. COLETTI, t. vii. 1471.

by overthrowing the monarchy of the Visigoths under the sword of the Arabs.

Severities against the Jews.

We can still recognise in their ceaseless but always impotent decrees against the Jews, whom they baptised by force, and furiously pursued even into private and domestic life, that implacable character of Spanish religion, which, two centuries before, had disgusted the great soul of St Martin against the persecutors of the Priscillianists,[1] and which has almost always failed of its aim by exceeding it, as is proved by the important part, more important here than anywhere else, played by Jews, and even by Jewesses, in the history of the middle ages in Spain. By a deplorable inconsistency, these pitiless measures had been preceded by the example of the persuasions employed unaided by King Recarede in the conversion of the Arian priests,[2] by the formal censure of St Isidore against the proselytising fanaticism of the Visigoth kings, and by that deliverence of the Council of 633, which breathes the intelligent toleration of victorious Christianity: "None can be saved who do not desire it. As man fell by listening of his own will to the serpent, so, upon the call of divine grace, man is saved, and believes only by the voluntary conversion of his own soul. It is not by force but by free will that they can be persuaded to conversion."[3]

[1] See above, vol. i. p. 457. [2] See above, vol. ii. p. 184.

[3] "De Judæis hoc præcepit sancta synodus: nemini deinceps ad creden-

It is well known, besides, that most of the laws passed by the Council of Toledo concerning political affairs are embodied in that celebrated code, which, under the name of *Liber* or *Forum Judicum* (in the Castilian language, *Fuero Juezgo*), is the principal basis of Spanish legislation, and one of the most curious monuments of the legislative history of Christian nations. St Isidore is believed to have been the first compiler of this record, in which the kings and bishops successively entered, along with the decrees of the councils, the ancient Gothic customs, and some fragments of Roman law.[1] It was reviewed and arranged by order of King Egica in the sixteenth Council of Toledo, in 693. This code survived Gothic Spain; through all the wretchedness of the Arab conquest, and the heroic struggle of the Spanish race against Islamism, its spirit continued to animate the princes and assemblies, and its luminous trace through history has always aided Spanish patriotism in recalling its Christian origin.

The *Fuero Juezgo* first made out by St Isidore.

The influence of the clergy is visible in the didactic style of its language, and still more in the gene-

dum vim inferre. . . . Non enim tales inviti salvandi sunt, sed volentes: sicut enim homo, etc. . . . Ergo non vi, sed libera arbitrii facultate, ut convertantur suadendi sunt, non potius impellendi."—*Concil. Toletan.* iv., can. 57. But immediately after, it must be confessed, it is added that those who had been forced to become Christians in the time of King Sisebut should be obliged to remain such, for this very doubtful reason: "Oportet ut fidem etiam, quam vi et necessitate susceperunt, tenere cogantur, ne nomen divinum blasphemetur, et fides quam susceperunt vilis ac contemptibilis habeatur!"

[1] AREVALO, *Isidoriana*, c. 92.

ral spirit of equity which has dictated its principal regulations, in the guarantees granted to slaves, but especially in the penalties, which, different from all other Barbarian codes, attempt to proportion punishment, not to the material injury done or to the rank of the culprit, but to the morality of the act.[1] The fusion of the two races, conquering and conquered, is also made apparent by the absence of all those distinctions of right or penalty which, in the laws of other Germanic nations, marked the different origin of races which inhabited the same country. There is good reason for regretting that this celebrated code was written during an age in which the primitive genius of the Goths was weakened, and in which Roman civilisation had too much effaced the strong individuality of Germanic institutions and national customs.[2] But the old law of the Germans may yet be found in the theory of royal rights, which recognises no other legitimate title of power than that which results from the morality and justice of its possessors. We shall see that theory retain all its force amid the great struggles between the priesthood and the empire, and shall hear, even in the times of Gregory VII., the voice of the bishops and monks apply against the emperors that axiom which the Visigothic code had set forth so energetically : "*Rex eris, si recte facis: si autem non facis, rex non eris.*"

[1] ALBERT DU BOYS, *Histore du Droit Criminel des Peuples Européens.*
[2] E. DE ROZIÈRE, *Formules Visigothiques*, Introd.

In 680 the bishops made a singular use of this right of deposition, in the case of the old King Wamba, who, after a glorious reign, being sick and poisoned by a Greek, had received the monastic habit and tonsure from the hands of the archbishop while he was supposed to be in extremity, according to a pious custom of the time, habitual to those who desired to make a public repentance before dying. When he came to himself, he thought himself obliged to ratify the vow which he had appeared to make,[1] and named as his successor Count Erwige, the son of the man who had poisoned him. He entered into a monastery, and lived there seven years, in holy obedience to his new duties; in the mean time, the bishops, met in the twelfth Council of Toledo, relieved his subjects from their oaths of fidelity, and anathematised the enemies of the new king. They afterwards decreed a canon which took into consideration the case of those who, having desired the *penitence* (that is, the tonsure and monastic habit) while they were in good health, and having received it without asking it during their illness, were desirous of returning to military life under pretence that they could not be bound by a vow which they had not made; their return is formally interdicted, because they are regarded as pledged, like children who have received baptism without

King Wamba made a monk in spite of himself.

[1] "Sive," says Mariana (*De Reb. Hisp.*, vi. 14), "animi magnitudine rursus spernentis, quæ alii per ignes ferrumque petunt; sive desperatione regnum recuperandi, cum Erwigius rerum potiretur."

being conscious of it. But the same canon forbids bishops to give the penitence to those who do not ask it, under pain of a year's excommunication.[1] Everything is obscure and strange in this history, which, nevertheless, is too closely connected with monastic annals to be passed in silence. This, however, was not the first time that kings had been obliged to become monks in Spain; a century before, one of the last kings of the Sueves had been made a monk against his will by a usurper: and the latter had been immediately after attacked and overcome by Leovigild, who forced him, in his turn, to enter the cloister, and added the kingdom of the Sueves to that of the Visigoths. But Leovigild was an Arian persecutor, and an orthodox council might have found better examples.[2]

St Fructuosus, monastic apostle of the Sueves, and of Lusitania.

In this very country of the Sueves, during the greater part of the seventh century, the true monastic spirit shed all its lustre in the person of St Fructuosus. "God created at this time," says a contemporary monk, "two great suns to light these western shores with the rays of that flaming truth which shone from the Apostolic See: the one, Isidore of Seville, relighted among us, by his eloquence, his writings, his wisdom, and active industry, the great light of dogmatic truth issued by the supreme

[1] Can. 2.

[2] If a French historian is to be believed, another king of the Goths, the young Tolga, after two years' reign, was deposed by an insurrection of the nobility, in 642, and forced to become a monk. "Tolganam degradatum ad honorem clericati fecit."—FREDEGAR, c. 82.

chair of Rome; the other, Fructuosus, by the immaculate innocence of his life, by the spiritual fire of his contemplations, made the virtues of the first Fathers of the desert, and the prodigies of the Thebaid, shine into our hearts."[1] Issued from the blood royal, and son of a general of the Gothic army, the young Fructuosus, when taken by his father into one of his estates upon the frontiers of Galicia to take account of his flocks, secretly noted in his soul a site for a future monastery in that wild country. His parents being dead, he withdrew, after having studied humane and sacred literature at Palencia, into the desert which he had chosen as a child, and built a monastery, which he endowed with all he had, and where he was shortly joined by a numerous band of monks.[2] But he himself, flying from the renown of his virtue, took refuge in the woods and most precipitous rocks, that he might be forgotten by all. One day while praying in a secluded spot in a forest, a labourer who passed by took him for a fugitive slave, questioned him, and, dissatisfied with his answers, overwhelmed him with blows, and led him by a rope round his neck to a place where he was recognised.[3]

[1] "Postquam . . . a Sede Romana, prima S. Ecclesiæ Cathedra, fidei catholicæ dogmatum fulgurans rutilaret immensitas . . . atque ex Ægypto . . . hujus occiduæ plagæ exigua perluceret extremitas. . . . Divina pietas duas inluminavit lucernas, etc."—*Vit. S. Fructuosi, auct.* S. Valerio, *abb.*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., *sæc.* ii. p. 557.

[2] That of Compludo (in the diocese of Astorga), which has been discussed before, on occasion of the charter of King Cyndaswynde, in 646.

[3] "Lo traia con un garrote."—Yepes p. 175.

Another time, like St Benedict, he was taken for a wild beast. A hunter, seeing him covered merely with a goat-skin, and prostrated upon the summit of a rock, had aimed an arrow at him, when he perceived, by seeing him lift his hands to heaven, that it was a man occupied in prayer.[1]

St Fructuosus and his doe.

On another occasion, a hind, pursued by the huntsman and almost hunted down, threw herself into the folds of the solitary's tunic. He saved her, and took her with him to the monastery; and the story runs that the monk and the wild creature loved each other tenderly. The hind followed him everywhere, slept at the foot of his bed, and bleated incessantly when he was absent. He sent her back more than once into the wood; but she always again found the road to his cell, or the footsteps of her liberator. One day at last she was killed by a young man who had no goodwill to the monks. Fructuosus was absent some days on a journey; on his return he was astonished not to see his hind running to meet him, and when he heard of her death, he was seized with grief, his knees trembled under him, and he threw himself upon the floor of the church. Whether he did this to ask of God the punishment of the cruel man, is not told; but the latter fell sick soon after, and begged the abbot to come to his aid. Fructuosus avenged him-

[1] "Loca nemorosa, argis densissima, aspera et fragosa . . . capreis pellibus indutus. In cujusdam rupis gradibus . . . quidam arcistes . . . cum librasset ictum ut dimitteret sagittam."—YEPES, c. 4.

self nobly, and like a Christian: he went to heal the murderer of his hind, and restored him to health of soul as well as to health of body.[1]

It is pleasant to see such gracious and innocent tenderness in times so rude, as well as in those strong souls, born to reign and draw nations after their footsteps. The example of the young Gothic noble, whom love of penitence had driven into solitude, became so contagious, that he had to build other monasteries to receive the immense choir of converts who pressed upon his steps.[2] The number became so great, that the duke of one of the provinces wrote to the king to warn him that if some obstacle was not interposed, the country would be so entirely depopulated, that there would remain nobody to fill up the ranks of the army. The women imitated the men; Fructuosus received one day a letter from a young girl of noble family, named Benedicta, betrothed to a *garding*—that is, to one of the principal officers of the Visigothic court—telling him that she had escaped from her father's house, that she was wandering in the woods not far from the monastery, and begging him to have pity on her as upon a sheep which he must snatch from

The betrothed bride of a *garding* received by Fructuosus.

[1] "Victa bestiola . . . sub viri Dei amphibalum ingressa est . . . si vel paululum ab ea recederet, nunquam balare cessaret, quousque ad eam denuo rediret . . . in lectulum ad pedes ejus recubaret. . . . Sanctissimus vir ad monasterium regressus, sollicite requisivit quidnam causæ esset cur caprea sua ei solito more tunc minime occurreret. . . . Qui mox genua sua summo cum dolore flectens."—YEPES, c. 10.

[2] "Ut catervatim undique concurrentium agmina conversorum immensus fieret chorus."—*Ibid.*, c. 15.

the fangs of the wolf. He received her, and built for her a little cell in the forest, which shortly became the centre of a community of eighty nuns, where mothers often came with their daughters to consecrate themselves to God. The *garding* endeavoured in vain to recover his betrothed: he compelled the superior of the new monastery to bring to him her who had fled from him: she came, but refused to look at him, and he remained mute in her presence. Then the royal judge said, "Leave her to serve the Lord, and find for yourself another wife."[1]

We cannot record all the marvellous incidents in the life of the monastic patriarch of Lusitania. We can only say that his austerities and endless journeys did not prevent him from cultivating literature, from recommending its study to his monks, nor even from giving himself to poetry; for some of his verses are still extant.[2] In the regulations which he composed for his different houses, we find that they kept great flocks of sheep, the profit of which furnished them with means for the assistance of the poor, for redeeming captives, and exercising hospitality. One monk was specially charged with the superintendence of the shepherds.

Some years before his death Fructuosus was, against his will, elevated to the archiepiscopal see of Braga, by the unanimous suffrages of the tenth

[1] "De præsentia regis levavit judicem, qui inter eos examinaret judicii veritatem, comitem Angelate . . . Dimitte eam Domino servire, et quære tibi aliam uxorem."—YEPES, c. 17.

[2] S. FRUCTUOSI *Carmina*, ap. FLOREZ, *Espana Sagrada*.

Council of Toledo. But he did not cease to practise the rule of monastic life, and to build new monasteries. And soon, thanks to his unwearied activity, he had covered Cantabria and Lusitania with communities of both sexes. He had surveyed all the coasts of Spain from Cape Finisterre to Cape St Vincent, crossing the embouchure of the rivers which were to be named Douro and Guadalquivir, reaching the promontories, the gulfs, and the islands, even to the spot where Cadiz was to be,[1] and seeking everywhere asylums for prayer and solitude. Thanks to him, the extreme frontier of the West will be guarded by a line of monastic garrisons. The great waves of the ocean rushing from the shores of another hemisphere, from that half of the world still unknown to Christians, will be met by the gaze and the prayers of the monks from the lofty cliffs of the Iberian peninsula. There they shall stand firm, awaiting the Mohammedan invasion; there they shall endure and survive it; there they shall preserve a nucleus of faith and Christian virtue, for those incomparable days when, from those shores freed by unwearied heroism, Spain and Portugal shall spring forth to discover a new world, and to plant the cross in Africa, in Asia, and in America.

He is made Archbishop of Braga. 656.

The shore of the ocean peopled with monks.

[1] "Cum præfatam Gaditanam ingressus fuisset insulam . . . ædificavit sanctum ope Die monasterium."—VALERIUS, c. 14. The particulars of the numerous foundations of St Fructuosus may be seen in the great work of Antonio de Yepes, *Coronica General de la Orden de San Benito*, folio, 1609, centuria ii. pp. 175, 187, 223, and following pages. This work, despite its inaccuracies, so often exposed by Mabillon, is invaluable for everything connected with monastic Spain.

BOOK VI.

THE MONKS UNDER THE FIRST MEROVINGIANS.

SUMMARY.

I. GAUL CONQUERED BY THE FRANKS.—State of Gaul under the Roman Empire.—Relative benefits from the invasion of the Barbarians. —The Franks arrest and beat back the other Barbarians.—Character of the government of the Franks in Gaul: equality of the Gauls and Franks.—Fatal contact of Frank barbarity and the depravity of the Gallo-Romans.—The nobility of the two races restrain the kings, who incline to autocracy and the Roman system of taxation.—The Franks alone escape Arianism: they respect the liberty of religion.—Munificence of the Merovingians towards the monasteries, strangely mixed with their vices and crimes.—The monks secure the civilising influence of the Church over the Franks.

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bert.—St Germain, Bishop of Paris; Abbey of St Germain-des-Près.—Clotaire I. and St Medard.—Gregory of Tours and the sons of Clotaire.—Note on the foundations of King Gontran in Burgundy.—The Abbot Aredius protests against the fiscal system of Chilperic, and frees his serfs.—Maternal love and monastic song.

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The monks and the brigands: St Seine and St Evroul.—The monks and the hunters: Brachio and the wild boar, at Menat.—Right of shelter for game.—St Calais and his buffalo; Childebert and Ultrogotha.—St Marculph and his hare.—St Giles and his hind.—The Abbess Ninnok.—St Desle and Clotaire II.—St Basle and his wild boar.—St Laumer and his hind.—Supernatural empire of the monks over the animals, the consequence of man's return to innocence.—MIRACLES IN HISTORY.—Vives, Titus Livius, De Maistre.—The monks and the wild beasts in the Thebaid.—Gerasimus and his lion.—St Martin and his plungeons.—St Benedict and his raven.—The monks and the birds in Gaul: St Maxent; St Valery; St Calais; St Malo; St Magloire.—Sites of monasteries indicated by animals: Fécamp.—St Thierry; St Berchaire at Hautvilliers.—Domestication of fallow-deer by the monks: Celtic legends: the wolves and stags: Herve, Pol de Leon, Colodocus.—St Leonor and the stags at the plough.—Agricultural works of the monks in the forest.—Clearing.—St Brieuc.—Fruit-trees.—Various occupations.—Influence of their example on the rural populations.—St Fiacre and his garden.—Karilef and his treasure.—Theodulph and his plough.—Solicitude of the monks for the spiritual welfare of the peasants.—Council of Rouen.—The forest canticle, the monastic spring in the woods.

BOOK VI.

THE MONKS UNDER THE FIRST MEROVINGIANS.

Si quid hoc in opere vobis præclarum videbitur, id veterum est, iis impertite quam merentur laudem. At me sicubi conjectura fefellit, si non sum scriptorum sententiam probe assecutus, si adulterinum aliquod scriptum pro legitimo suscepi, si respui quod rectum erat et purum, date veniam et me admonete.—BOLLANDUS, *Acta Sanctorum*, t. i. p. xliv. (*c*).

I.—GAUL CONQUERED BY THE FRANKS.

WE have overstepped the course of time to indicate all that monastic institutions owe to the greatest of popes, and what they became in the Iberian peninsula under leaders imbued with his spirit. We must now go back a century and cross the Alps and Pyrenees, to concentrate our narrative in Gaul, in that country where Marmoutier, Lerins, Condat, and other great foundations had not exhausted the monastic impulse, and where Providence destined the Benedictine tree to shoot out its most vigorous and productive branches.

In the year of St Benedict's birth, Clovis began 480.
to reign over the Salian Franks, and during the whole lifetime of the patriarch, Gaul, disputed by the Franks against the Goths and Burgundians, gradually yielded to the powerful pressure of the

Merovingians and their conquering bands. The evils which accompanied that conquest are known. But the condition to which the rule of Rome had reduced Gaul when the Franks, coming last after so many other Barbarians, took it for their prey, should not be forgotten. Under the emperors, Rome had carried corruption into all the provinces of the world which under the republic she had conquered. Tacitus shows us that every seat of Roman administration was a permanent school of oppression and depravity, where avarice and sensuality reigned always insatiable and unpunished.[1] Of the old Gauls who had overrun Spain, Italy, Greece, and even Asia Minor; who had filled the world with the din of their arms and the terror of their name; who had conquered Rome; whom Rome had afterwards vanquished and enslaved, but whom she had never surpassed nor even equalled in heroism and greatness of soul,—of these men none remained. The tyranny of the Cæsars had annihilated them. In vain their sons rose under Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, and Vespasian, protesting thus against the pretended amelioration in the fate of the Roman provinces under the Empire. Vainly, from age to age, had Gaul, in despair of regaining her independence, attempted to cheat her misery by imposing Gaulish emperors on Rome. In vain the insurgent and half-Christian Bagaudes had meditated the substitution of a kind of Gaulish

Condition of Gaul under Roman rule.

[1] Compare DOELLINGER, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 728.

empire in place of the Roman. Ground down by the merciless millstone of the imperial government and taxation, Gaul had lost its nationality, its civil and municipal institutions, its territorial wealth, its ancient Celtic tongue, and even its name, one after the other; its inhabitants were known only under the name of Romans, a name which for them was the symbol of decrepitude and shame.[1] In place of their ancient national worship—Druidical sacrifices, which were interdicted under pain of death—the hideous idolatry of the Cæsars, whom a vile senate declared divine, was imposed upon them. That dauntless courage which had hitherto pointed them out to the admiration of the world, had disappeared with their liberty.[2] The ruling classes were enslaved and degraded, while the lower ranks of the people had gained nothing: on the contrary, in proportion to the extension of great estates, the husbandmen found their lot aggravated, and the universal servitude weighed upon them with a crushing yoke. The free clients of whom Cæsar speaks had disappeared. The Gaulish chiefs, transformed into degenerate patricians, had the vast estates on which they scarcely ever lived cultivated by slaves, like the plantations of our colonies before

[1] "The state of the Gauls under the imperial government was one of the most debasing and cruel political slavery."—Mlle. DE LÉZARDIÈRE, *Théorie des Lois Politiques de la France.* "The title of *Roman citizens* which the Gauls bore had long belonged only to slaves."—MABLY, *Observations sur l'Histoire de France*, t. i. p. 243.

[2] "Amissa virtute pariter et libertate."—TACITUS, *Agric.*, ii.; *Ann.* xi. 18; *Germ.*, 28. DOELLINGER, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 611-613.

the emancipation of the negroes.[1] It has been calculated that there scarcely remained, in the time of Constantine, a million of freemen in all that immense region.[2]

The Church alone remained erect, the sole asylum of human dignity and freedom, under this frightful oppression. She alone put some check upon injustice and tyranny, mitigated the overwhelming poverty of the people, encouraged agriculture in her own lands, retained in her bosom the memory and practice of popular election, and assured *Defenders*, in the persons of her bishops, to cities abandoned or ransomed by their magistrates. But her influence, far from being preponderant, could only struggle imperfectly against the universal decay, and had no power to reproduce those civic virtues which were stifled like the free cities under the cosmopolitan despotism of the emperors.[3] Four centuries of Roman government had been enough to divest Gaul of all law and order in civil affairs, as well as of all national and personal independence. How could such a population, debased and exhausted by a rule, the very weakness of which increased its minute and imbecile tyranny,

[1] See the excellent summary of the oppression and ruin of the Gauls under Roman dominion, which is given, after many other writers, by Sir James Stephen, *Lectures on the History of France* (London), 1859, t. i. p. 57. As to the details, M. Guizot, in his *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, and his second lesson of the course for 1824, has been surpassed as yet by none, except perhaps by Le Huerou, in chap. viii. of his *Origines Mérovingiennes* (Paris), 1843.

[2] HENRI MARTIN, *Histoire de France*, t. i. p. 292, 4th edition.

[3] STEPHEN, loc. cit.; H. MARTIN, p. 332.

resist the repeated inroads of the Barbarians? The Arverne aristocracy alone, which seemed to be animated still by the spirit of the great Vercingetorix, and which had retained popular sympathy by some unknown means, struggled with the obstinacy of despair against the Visigoths in the first place, and then against the sons of Clovis. Everywhere else the Barbarian domination was accepted as a kind of deliverance.

Mutual advantages of the Barbarian invasion.

And indeed it actually was such, for the German nations brought with them that manly energy which the serfs of the empire lacked. Life had everywhere ebbed away; the conquerors brought a new life to the soil which they invaded, as well as to the men whom they incorporated under their victorious sway. All that remained of the nobility of Gaul saw them appear with terror; but what had the rural colonists and humble townspeople to lose by this change of masters? On the contrary, they could only gain by the destruction of that Roman system of taxation, the most rapacious that was ever dreamed of. To take for themselves a portion, the half or a third, of landed property and slaves, as did the Burgundians and Visigoths, but at the same time to exempt the remainder from all those exactions which under the Romans compelled the landowners to abandon all they possessed to the treasury, was to bring an evident and real relief to an insupportable state of things.[1]

[1] PAUL ROTH., *Geschichte der Benefizialwesens*; LEO, *Ursprung des*

As for the Franks, there is no evidence that they ever decreed general confiscations. The discoveries of modern study have proved, on the contrary, that they generally respected the private property of the Gallo-Romans. According to all appearance, they contented themselves with the lands which were at first conceded to them by the emperors, and with the vast stretches of uncultivated soil, abandoned in consequence of the universal impoverishment, which they shared among themselves by lot, and which were called *allodia*, while their kings appropriated the immense estates of the imperial treasury. Let us add, that in expelling the Roman magistrates, they seem to have interfered little with municipal government, but to have left the principal part of it in the hands of the bishops, and we shall be able to conceive how, as the latest of our historians affirms, the mass of the people had more horror for the pedantic and systematic oppression of the empire, than for the brutal and capricious sway of the Barbarians.[1]

Besides, the Romans of the empire, as has been often remarked, carried into Gaul a principle proper to themselves, the fatal principle of the supremacy of cities. The Germans, on the contrary, in their primitive state, knew no life but that of the fields, a rural and sylvan existence. The village was, as

Deutschen Volkes und Reiches, p. 324; CANTU, *Storia degl' Italiani*, ch. 63; STEPHEN, loc. cit., p. 300; LE HUEROU, p. 268.

[1] HENRI MARTIN, p. 354. Le Huerou furnishes proof of this by undeniable evidence, op. cit., p. 251.

it may still be seen in India, the foundation of their national life. In conquering Gaul, they restored life to its plains; they created there the village, the free and rural community, and emancipated them from the sway of towns; they constituted there the most influential element in the new nationality. This preponderance was only more and more manifested and consolidated in proportion as the feudal system developed itself and struck root in the soil.

The Franks arrest and beat back the other Barbarians.

The Franks conferred, besides, a crowning service on Gaul, which she had looked for in vain from the last emperors. St Jerome has left us a formidable list of the Barbarian nations which had invaded her lands under imperial rule. "The countries that lie between the Alps and Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the sea, have been devastated by the Quade, the Vandal, the Sarmate, the Alain, the Gepid, the Herule, the Burgonde, the Aleman, and, oh supreme calamity! by the Hun."[1] Coming after all these ferocious predecessors, each of whom, except the Burgondes, had only passed through Gaul like a tempest, the Franks debarred from entrance the other pagan nations who pressed upon their steps. They turned against the current by which they had themselves been brought. They made vigorous head against the Alemans, the Saxons, the Slaves, and the Avars, who, but for them, would have crossed the Rhine and invaded Gaul. Becoming Christians, not in a body or all at once

[1] *Epist. ad Ageruchiam*, t. iv. p. 748, edit. 1706.

in the train of Clovis, as has been erroneously supposed, but very gradually and slowly,[1] they set their face against the enemies of Christendom. They remained, long after their conversion, as wild, fierce, and cruel as before. They were not transformed in a day. Two centuries of fratricidal wars between the Merovingian kings demonstrate this only too clearly, while they also prove the superstitious veneration, the pagan idolatry, which the Franks entertained for that long-haired dynasty, the scions of which they deposed and murdered one by one, but apart from which no one among them had yet dreamt of seeking chiefs of a different race.

Character of the Frank rule.

Their barbarism cannot be denied; we must not only believe all that historians have said of them, but add that here, as throughout all antiquity, these narratives are far from reaching the full extent "of unknown tyranny, unpunished rapine, and unavenged destruction."[2] But we must not believe that the Franks were, as has been assumed,

[1] More than a century after Clovis, we still find pagans among Franks of the most elevated rank. St Lupus, bishop of Sens, exiled by Clotaire II. about 615, was intrusted to the care of a duke called Boson, who was still pagan, and who occupied the shores of the Oise: "Ubi erant templa phanatica a decurionibus culta . . . prædictum ducem vitali tinxit in lavacro, *plurimumque Francorum exercitum*, qui adhuc erroris detinebatur laqueis, illuminavit per baptismum."—Act. SS. Bolland., t. 1 Sept., p. 259. The second successor of St Colomba at Bobbio, the Abbot Bertulf, who died in 640, was of pagan birth, although a near relation of St Arnoul, bishop of Metz. It will be seen hereafter, that a great proportion of the Franks established in Belgium remained idolaters even in the eighth century.

[2] Ozanam, *Etudes German.*, t. ii. p. 502.

less civilised, less human, and greater oppressors than the other Barbarians. In no point of view do they deserve a lower place than the Visigoths or Burgundians. They had evidently as much inclination and attraction towards the cultivation of the mind and literature. The chapel which the Merovingian kings instituted in the earliest times of their conversion, with the school which was immediately attached to it, as an inseparable appendage to the royal residence, became soon a nursery of zealous and learned clerks, where the young Frank and Gallo-Roman nobility drew such instruction as was best adapted to their time and habits. The important charges of the Church and court were given to those who had distinguished themselves there.[1] All the biographies of the saints are unanimous in stating this fact; and Gregory of Tours confirms it, by speaking of the *palatine erudition*, as of a kind of ecclesiastical and political novitiate which was in active operation under the grandsons of Clovis.[2]

Palatine education of the young nobility.

It is still more certain that the oppression of the Gallo-Romans by the Franks was never systematic, nor so specially cruel and complete, as a theory cleverly upheld in our own days, but contradicted

Equality of the Franks and Gauls.

[1] Numerous and precise details on this subject are to be found in *L'Histoire de St Léger*, by Dom Pitra, p. 114, and Appendix. This word *chapel*, as synonymous with *oratory*, is derived, according to Ducange, from the little *cape* or cloak of St Martin, which was one of the most noted Merovingian relics.

[2] *Vit. S. Aredii Abbatis*, c. 3.

by all contemporary writers, would have it to be. Doubtless, in the north-east district of Gaul, which was the first occupied by the Franks, who were then entirely pagan, the Roman population was cruelly spoiled and maltreated, if not entirely exterminated. But after their conversion, in proportion as they approached the Loire, and especially when they spread themselves to the south of that river, the Gallo-Romans are seen to have preserved all their property, and to have enjoyed absolutely the same rights as their conquerors. Among the Franks, as among the Gauls, poor men, artisans and slaves, are to be seen, as well as rich men and nobles. The nobles of Gaul, and members of those families called senatorial, occupied the same rank as under the Roman empire, and were associated in the court and military retinue of the Merovingian kings with the leudes and *antrustions* of Frankish race. The Gallo-Romans are everywhere found in the highest ranks, not only in the Church, where they had, up to the end of the sixth century, almost exclusive possession of the bishoprics, but among the *companions of the king*, among the dukes and counts, at the head of armies, and even in the offices of the royal household, which might well have been exclusively reserved for the companions and compatriots of the prince.

It is at the same time necessary to remark the difference established by the Salic law in the rate of *compensation* due for murders committed upon the

Franks and upon the Romans, from which we perceive that the life of a Roman is estimated at half the value only of that of a Frank. Except that single particular, in which the natural pride of the victor manifests itself, no trace of radical distinction is to be found between the conquering and conquered races. The Gallo-Roman retained his private rights, but was subject to the same laws and obtained the same guarantees as the Frank. As for public rights, he was exposed, like the Frank, but not more than he, to the atrocious violences which daily broke out in that society, and which were as often originated by himself as by the Frank or Burgundian.[1] For there were Gallo-Romans as deeply imbued as the Barbarians with that ferocity which is inspired by the possession of uncontrolled wealth and strength. They had their share in almost all the crimes and treacheries which appear in the annals of this unhappy period. It has been said with justice, "The greatest evil of Barbarian government was perhaps the influence of the greedy and corrupt Romans, who insinuated themselves into the confidence of their new masters."[2] It is to them especially that those refinements of debauchery and perfidy, which it is so surprising to

Fatal contact between Frank barbarity and Gallo-Roman depravity.

[1] Roth and Leo, in the works already quoted, and Waitz (*Deutsche Verfassungs Geschichte*), have shown beyond dispute this identity of position between the Frankish and Gaulish nobility under the Merovingian sway: the Abbé Dubos had made it the basis of his absurd system on the absence of all conquest.

[2] HENRI MARTIN, t. i. p. 394. Compare AUGUSTIN THIERRY, *Récits Mérov.*, t. ii. p. 45, and ALBERT DU BOYS, *Histoire du Droit Criminel.*

find amid the savage brutality of the German tribes, should be attributed. They instructed their conquerors in the art of oppression, and taught them how to degrade their compatriots, by means which the natural obtuseness of the Goths and Teutons could never have suggested. The Barbarians derived no advantage from their contact with the Roman world, depraved as it was under the empire. They brought with them manly virtues, of which the conquered race had lost even the recollection; but they borrowed, at the same time, abject and contagious vices, of which the Germanic world had no conception. They found Christianity there; but before they yielded to its beneficent influence, they had time to plunge into all the baseness and debauchery of a civilisation corrupted long before it was vanquished. The patriarchal system of government which characterised the ancient Germans, in their relations with their children and slaves as well as with their chiefs, fell into ruin in contact with that contagious depravity.

At a later period, when the Christian spirit had established its empire, and when all the old Roman remains had been absorbed and transformed by the German element under the first Carlovingians, the evil lessened, and if it did not disappear completely, all the nations of Christendom at least could constitute themselves under laws and manners which they needed neither to blush for nor to complain of. But at the period of which we treat

nothing could be more sad than the first fusion of Germanic barbarism and Roman corruption. All the excesses of a savage condition were then combined with the vices of a civilisation learnedly depraved. From this perverse and fatal origin flow these revolting abuses of seignorial right, which, continued and developed by the course of time, debased the feudal system and made it so unpopular. And here we must seek the secret of these monstrous examples of treason and ferocity which appear on almost every page of the narrative of Gregory of Tours, and throw a sanguinary light upon the early pages of our history.

The kings show an inclination towards the Roman despotism and taxing system.

Thence, also, came the attempts of the Merovingian kings to re-establish and aggravate the Roman system of taxation. Sometimes it was the churches from which they exacted the payment of a third of their revenues;[1] sometimes it was the poll-tax which they tried to establish, not, as among the Romans, upon the plebeians without landed property, but upon all, and first on the Franks themselves. But here the old Germanic law took the upper hand. Even in the absence of the national assemblies, which seem to have been suspended during the reign of Clovis and his immediate successors,[2] the resistance was energetic and triumphant. The Merovingian kings had vainly manifested an inclination to imitate the despotism of the Roman empe-

[1] Greg. Tur., iv. 2.

[2] Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungs Geschichte*, tit. ii. p. 480.

They are restrained by the nobility of the two races.

rors, for they had always to reckon with the Frank nobles, who would not renounce the freedom of their ancestors upon soil conquered by themselves, and who, reinforced by the descendants of the old chivalrous races of Gaul,[1] soon formed around the throne an aristocracy at once civil and warlike, free and powerful, as proud of its origin as of its rights, and resolved not to be reduced to the vile level of the Roman senate.[2] According to the old privilege of German freedom, they assumed the right of speaking out on every subject, interfering actively in all public interests, resisting all usurpations, and striking down the guilty.[3] Their superstitious regard for the Merovingian blood, their traditional devotion to the person of the chief, led them to fill domestic offices about the persons of their kings, which among the ancient Romans were reserved for slaves, but which bore no servile character among the German races, and were, on the contrary, the privilege of the principal men of the nation, who were called *trusty*.[4] But this loyalty did not prevent them from opposing to the violence of their

[1] The *Equites*, of whom Cæsar speaks, with their dependants, whose analogy with German manners he did not understand, and whose position he has not sufficiently distinguished from servitude.

[2] Terms which prove the great importance attached to birth are to be found on every page of the contemporary authors, and especially in the Lives of the Saints: *seniores, potentes, meliores, nobiles*. . . . *Claro stemmate ortus*. . . . *Ex progenie celsa Francorum Prosapia Francorum altis satis et nobilibus parentibus*, &c. Compare WAITZ, op. cit.

[3] AUG. THIERRY, *Récits Mérovingiens*, tit. ii. p. 95.

[4] *Antrustion*, man in the confidence (*trust*) of the chief, a term translated in the Latin version of the Salic law by that of *conviva regis*.

master other outbreaks of violence not less dreadful, and often not less illegitimate. "Farewell," said a deputation of Austrasian lords to King Gontran of Burgundy, grandson of Clovis—"farewell, oh king! we take leave of thee, reminding thee that the axe which has broken the head of thy brethren is still bright; and it shall be thy brains next which it will dash out."[1]

Connection of the Franks with the Church.

By what prodigious change did these scarcely-baptised Barbarians become the cherished nation of the Church, and the chosen race of Christendom? This will be seen by the following narrative. In the mean time, it must be acknowledged that, by a singular privilege, they were never Arians. They alone, among all the Barbarian conquerors of the empire, never permitted their energy and simplicity to become the victims of that heresy, which exercised an inexplicable ascendancy over all the Germanic tribes, and which, overcome among the old Christians, formed for itself a triumphant asylum among their conquerors. Closing Gaul against the other Barbarians, and assuring Catholic unity within her by pursuing heresy without open persecution, was to render two crowning services to new-born Christendom. South of the Loire, the Catholic population, which was too well aware of the persecutions raised against the orthodox clergy in Spain and Africa by the Arian Barbarians, passionately longed

They alone escaped from Arianism.

[1] "Valedicimus tibi, o rex. . . . Scimus solidam esse securim . . . celerius tuum librabit defixa cerebrum."—GREG. TURON., lib. vii. c. 14.

for the government of the Franks.[1] It was for this reason that St Remy said to the detractors of Clovis, "Much must be pardoned to him who has been the propagator of the faith, and the saviour of provinces." This explains without justifying those terms of adulation which most of the ecclesiastical writers have addressed to princes whose public and private life was stained with atrocious crimes. Different from the Byzantine emperors, who interposed the authority of the state in spiritual affairs on all occasions, and who believed themselves better theologians than the bishops, they meddled little in theology, and, except in the too numerous cases where they tampered with the freedom of episcopal elections in favour of their domestics or followers, they left the Church entirely independent in matters of faith and discipline. They displayed, also, great liberality to the bishops and monks: they did not content themselves with restoring to the Church all that had been taken from her; they selected from the immense possessions which had become crown-lands by conquest, at the same time as they divided the land into *benefices* for their *trusty* laymen, other vast territories, mostly uncultivated, desert, or covered with inaccessible forests, with which they endowed the principal monasteries erected during the Merovingian period.[2]

The Merovingians respect the freedom of faith.

Their liberality towards monasteries,

[1] "Amore desiderabili."—GREG. TURON., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ii. c. 23.

[2] The royal treasury is mentioned in the first well-authenticated charter of Clovis, in favour of the Abbey of Micy, near Orleans.—AD. BREQUIGNY, No. 6.

The great farms, or *towns*, where the Frankish kings held their court, in the centre of agricultural labours, were repeatedly transformed into religious establishments.[1]

Strangely mingled with vices and crimes.

And yet they were sad Christians. While they respected the freedom of the Catholic faith, and made external profession of it, they violated without scruple all its precepts, and at the same time the simplest laws of humanity. After having prostrated themselves before the tomb of some holy martyr or confessor, after having distinguished themselves by the choice of an irreproachable bishop, after having listened respectfully to the voice of a pontiff or monk, we see them, sometimes in outbreaks of fury, sometimes by cold-blooded cruelties, give full course to the evil instincts of their savage nature. Their incredible perversity was most apparent in the domestic tragedies, the fratricidal executions and assassinations, of which Clovis gave the first example, and which marked the history of his son and grandson with an ineffaceable stain. Polygamy and perjury mingled in their daily life with a semi-pagan superstition; and in reading these bloody biographies, scarcely lightened by some transient gleams of faith or humility, it is difficult to believe that, in embracing Christianity, they gave up a single pagan vice or adopted a single Christian virtue.

It was against this barbarity of the soul, far more

[1] For example, Ebreuil, in Auvergne.

alarming than grossness and violence of manners, that the Church triumphantly struggled. From the midst of these frightful disorders, of this double current of corruption and ferocity, the pure and resplendent light of Christian sanctity was about to rise. But the secular clergy, itself tainted by the general demoralisation of the two races, was not sufficient for this task.[1] They needed the powerful and soon preponderating assistance of the monastic army. It did not fail: the Church and France owe to it the decisive victory of Christian civilisation over a race much more difficult to subdue than the degenerate subjects of Rome or Byzantium. While the Franks, coming from the north, completed the subjugation of Gaul, the Benedictines were about to approach from the south, and superimpose a pacific and beneficent dominion upon the Germanic Barbarian conquest. The junction and union of these forces, so unequal in their civilising power, were destined to exercise a sovereign influence over the future of our country.

The monks came to insure the civilising influence of the Church.

II.—ARRIVAL OF THE BENEDICTINES IN GAUL.

The fame of Benedict and his work had not been slow to cross the frontiers of Italy; it resounded specially into Gaul. A year before the death of the

[1] Leo (op. cit.) has very justly remarked, that owing to the demoralisation of the native clergy, the complete conversion of the Franks was a longer and more arduous task to the ecclesiastical and monastic

patriarch, two envoys arrived at Monte Cassino from the Gallo-Roman prelate, Innocent, bishop of Mans, who, not content with forty monasteries which had arisen during his episcopacy in the country of the Cenomans, still desired to see his diocese enriched by a colony formed by the disciples of the new legislator of cenobites in Italy. Benedict confided this mission to the dearest and most fervent of his disciples, a young deacon named Maurus, of patrician origin like himself, who had worthily prepared himself for these distant labours by outdoing the austerities of the Rule, and who seemed to be regarded by the whole community as the natural successor of their founder. He gave him four companions (one of whom has written the history of the mission[1]), and bestowed upon him a copy of the Rule, written with his own hand, together with the weights for the bread and the measure for the wine which should be allotted to each monk every day, to

Mission of St Maur into Gaul.

apostles of Gaul than the conversion of England, or even of Germany, had been, where all was done in a single stroke by a body of foreign missionaries and monks.

[1] The Life of St Maur, by his companion, Faustus, has suffered some grievous interpolations in the ninth century, according to the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, by D'Achery and Mabillon. Father Papebroch (ap. BOLLAND. d. 16 and 22 May) regards it as completely mendacious. But the authenticity of his mission, and of the principal features of his biography, contested by Basnage and Baillet, has been victoriously demonstrated by Mabillon himself (*Præf. in Sæc.* I., Act. SS. O. S. B.), and, above all, by Dom Ruinart in the Appendix of Vol. I. of the *Annales Benedictines* of Mabillon. Compare, also, the learned *Histoire des Evêques du Mans*, by Dom Piolin, a Benedictine of Solesmes, 1851, t. i. p. 237. This last work includes some very valuable details on the propagation of cloistral life in Maine during the sixth century.

serve as unchanging types of that abstinence which was to be one of the strongest points of the new institution.

His journey.

At the head of this handful of missionaries, who went to sow afar the seed destined to produce so great a harvest, Maurus came down from Monte Cassino, crossed Italy and the Alps, paused at Agaune, the sanctuary which the Burgundian monarch had just raised over the relics of the Theban legion,[1] then went into the Jura to visit the colonies of Condat, and doubtless to make the rule of his master known there. Arrived upon the banks of the Loire, and repulsed by the successor of the bishop who had called him, he stopped in Anjou, which was then governed by a viscount called Florus, in the name and under the authority of the king of Austrasia, Theodebert, the grandson of Clovis. This viscount offered one of his estates to the disciple of Benedict, that he might establish his colony there, besides giving one of his sons to become a monk, and announcing his own intention of consecrating himself to God. Maurus accepted the gift, but only by a formal donation, and before witnesses; "for," he said to the Frank lord, "our observances require peace and security above all."[2] In this estate, bathed by the waters of the Loire, he

[1] See above, vol. i. p. 494.

[2] "Observatio Ordinis nostri summam deposcit quietem et securitatem. . . . Te tradente nobis coram testibus. . . . Scripto Testamento tradidit ei omnia et de suo jure in ejus delegavit potestatem atque dominium."—*Vit. S. Mauri*, c. 42, 43. This passage may be one of the

founded the monastery of Glanfeuil, which afterwards took his own name.[1] The site of this monastery, now lost among the vineyards of Anjou, merits the grateful glance of every traveller who is not insensible to the advantages which flowed from that first Benedictine colony over entire France.

He founds Glanfeuil, the first Benedictine monastery in Gaul.

With a touching and legitimate reminiscence of ancient monastic glory, Maurus consecrated one of the four churches or chapels of his new abbey to St Martin, who had founded, at no great distance, and on the banks of the same river, the still celebrated sanctuary of Marmoutier,[2] and another to St Severin, that Roman monk who, on the banks of the Danube, subdued the ferocity of the Barbarians while he blessed the future of Odoacer. The beloved son of St Benedict spent forty years at the head of his French colony: he saw as many as a hundred and forty monks officiate there; and when he died, after having lived apart for two years in an isolated cell, to prepare himself in

interpolations of the ninth century pointed out by Mabillon; nevertheless, we have instanced it as one of the first examples of the forms employed for donations of this nature, so numerous subsequent to the sixth century in Gaul.

[1] St Maur-sur-Loire. The relics of Maurus remained there until the ninth century, when, for fear of the Normans, they were transferred to St Maur-les-Fossés, near Paris, another monastery which will be often mentioned.

[2] See vol. i. p. 460. To judge of the influence which was exercised over Gaul by the great Martin, founder of Marmoutier, two centuries after his lifetime, we must read the four books by Gregory of Tours, entitled *De Miraculis S. Martini*, of which the *Société de l'Histoire de France* has just published a new edition, revised by M. Bordier.

silence for appearing before God,[1] he had dropped into the soil of Gaul a germ which could neither perish nor be exhausted; and which, a thousand years after, was to produce under the very name of the modest founder of Glanfeuil a new efflorescence of monastic genius, destined to become the synonym of laborious learning, and one of the most undisputed glories of France.[2]

Progress of the Benedictine rule in Gaul.

A certain obscurity hangs over the early progress of the Benedictine rule in Gaul after the first foundation of St Maur. We have already pointed out the progress of cenobitical life due to the great schools of Marmoutier, Lerins, and Condat, before the age of St Benedict. This progress did not diminish after him, since eighty new establishments can be reckoned during the course of the sixth century alone in the valleys of the Saone and Rhone, ninety-four between the Pyrenees and the Loire, fifty-four from the Loire to the Vosges, and ten from the Vosges to the Rhine.[3] This was a renewed and more complete conversion of that great country. Each province by degrees received for its

[1] "Biennio ante mortem siluit sejunctus ab hominibus, et solus in superni inspectoris oculis habitavit secum."—*Breviarium Monasticum.*

[2] The brotherhood of St Maur, immortalised by the works of Mabillon, Montfaucon, Ruinart, and many others, was created in 1618. It sprang from the association formed by various very ancient abbeys for the adoption of the reform introduced at the end of the sixteenth century in the monasteries of Lorraine by Dom Didier de la Cour, abbot of St Vanne.

[3] M. Mignet has taken these numbers from the Benedictine Annals of Mabillon. See his fine *Mémoire sur la Conversion de l'Allemagne par les Moines*, p. 32.

apostles holy monks, who were also often bishops, and who founded at the same time dioceses and monasteries, the latter destined to be citadels and nurseries of the diocesan clergy.[1]

The councils of the Gauls were more and more frequently occupied with questions of monastic discipline, without, however, noting any special congregation. They showed themselves animated by the spirit which dictated the famous canon of the General Council of Chalcedon in 451, in virtue of which monks were placed under the control of bishops. That of Agde, in 511, renewed the prohibition against founding new monasteries without the knowledge of the bishop. Those of Orleans (511, and especially 533), of Epaone (517), and of Arles (558), completely subjected monasteries to the authority and superintendence of the bishops. The abbots could neither be absent nor dispose of any of the property of the community without episcopal permission; once a-year they were to wait upon their bishop to receive his advice, and if need were his corrections.[2] The Council held in the Basilica of St Martin at Tours, in 567, which quotes Seneca in its fourteenth Canon in favour of the precautions to be taken against the scandal of incontinence, pronounces the penalty of excommunication in Canon XV. against

[1] "Ut urbis esset munimentum,"—*Vie de S. Domnole*, bishop and founder of St Vincent-du-Mans, c. 4, ap. BOLLAND,, 16 Maii.

[2] Concil. Aurel., an. 511, c. 19.

every monk who should marry, and against every judge who should refuse to declare the dissolution of such a marriage. But by the great number of different rules and successive reforms, and still more by the narratives of violence and abuse which Gregory of Tours has honestly transmitted to us, the resistance met with by the Christian ideal of monastic life may well be understood.

How did all these communities, so numerous and diverse, come to recognise the Benedictine Rule as that which was to insure their existence and prosperity? This can only be discovered in some houses more or less celebrated. It was not the work of one of those sudden, radical, and ephemeral transformations to which modern history has accustomed us; it was the slow and instinctive progress of an institution which sought the conditions of permanent durability. The conquest was made gradually and imperceptibly.[1] But it is undeniable that this progress was universal, despite the formidable rivalry of the Rule of St Columba; and not less undeniable is the fact, that the mission of St Maurus was the channel by which the sovereign paternity of the Italian legislator extended by degrees to all the monasteries of Gaul.[2]

[1] "Nunquam nobis venit in mentem ut asserere velimus omnia aut pleraque Galliarum monasteria, adveniente Mauro, Benedictinam regulam statim admisisse. . . . Quæ postea sensim sine sensu ita per alia monasteria sequentibus annis propagata fuerit, donec tandem sola prævaluerit in toto Galliarum imperio."—D. RUINART, *in Append. Annal. Bened.*, tom. i. p. 636.

[2] The formal testimony of St Odillon, the celebrated abbot of Cluny

First meeting of the Merovingian monarchs with the Benedictines.

This mission marks out besides, in history, the first encounter of the Benedictine order with that French monarchy, then only dawning under the shield of Clovis and his descendants, but which we shall see through many centuries the faithful and grateful ally of the sons of St Benedict. The district of Anjou in which Glanfeuil was situated fell to the lot of that grandson of Clovis, named Theodebert,[1] who reigned at Metz and over Austrasia. It was he from whom the Viscount Florus, according to tradition, had to obtain, first the necessary authority for the establishment of the foreign monks, and then permission to enroll himself among them. This king, celebrated in the history of the Merovingians for his exploits in

is as follows: "Post Sancti Benedicti ex hac vita migrationem, per Beatum Maurum illius discipulum omnis pene Gallia ejus institutiones et religionis instituta suscepit, atque per eumdem Maurum, eosque quos ille ad justitiam erudivit, per longa temporum spatia, eadem religio ad perfectionis cumulum excrevit."—ODILO, *Vit. S. Maioli*, ap. *Surium*, 11 Maii.

[1] Professor Roth, in his important work entitled *Geschichte der Beneficialwesens* (Erlangen, 1850, p. 440), takes pains to show the fictitious character of this narrative, grounding his argument on the fact that, in the division of Gaul among the Frankish kings, Anjou belonged, not to Theodebert, but to Childebert, and that this province only fell at a later period into the hands of a king of Austrasia of the same name, Theodebert II., who reigned from 596 to 602. But we can answer with Ruinart, that nothing is less certain than the exact limitation of the provinces with which the sons of Clovis constituted the different parts of their kingdoms, and nothing more strange than the subdivision of all the territory situated south of the Loire. Another learned contemporary who has devoted his attention to the origin of Frank royalty, Professor Leo, proves that Thierry, the father of Theodebert, and the eldest of the sons of Clovis, exercised a sort of sovereignty over the estates of his brothers, and that his possessions surrounded all parts of the patrimonies of the latter.—See *Des Deutschen Volkes Ursprung und Werden*, 1854, p. 353.

Aquitaine against the Visigoths, and in Italy against the imperial forces, consented very reluctantly to part with one of his principal officers, and only after having himself visited the new colony. He came with all the pomp which the race of Clovis were so prompt to borrow from the fallen empire; but, clothed in his purple as he was, as soon as he perceived Maur, the Frank king prostrated himself before the Roman monk, as Totila prostrated himself before Benedict, entreating the abbot to pray for him, and to inscribe his name among those of the brethren. He presented his young son to the community, desired that the monks who had come from Monte Cassino with the abbot might be specially pointed out to him, asked their names, and embraced them and also their brethren. Then he surveyed the monastic precincts, ate with the monks in the refectory, and before he went away, desired that the chief of his scribes should make out on the spot, and seal with his ring, the donation of an estate belonging to the crown, which he intended to bestow on the monastery. Florus afterwards obtained the king's consent to witness his profession as a monk. After having added new gifts to his first donation, the viscount freed and portioned twenty of his slaves; then, having laid his military sword-belt on the altar, he knelt before the king, who, at the request of the abbot, cut the first lock of his hair; the tonsure was then completed by the other nobles present. Before leaving the monas-

Interview between Theodebert and St Maur at Glanfeuil.

tery the king desired to see his old friend in the monastic dress; he exhorted him to do honour to that new habit, as he had done honour to secular life, then threw himself into the arms of Florus and wept there before he withdrew, carrying with him the benediction of the abbot.[1]

Thus the Frank king and the Benedictine became acquainted with each other, and these two forces which were to found France, to direct and represent her during long centuries, stood face to face for the first time.

Admitting even that this tale may have been embellished, in its minute details, by the imagination of after ages, it is worthy of being remembered as a sort of type of those intimate and cordial relations which began to exist from that time between the princes of Germanic race and the monks, and which are to be found almost on every page of their double history.

III.—PREVIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MEROVINGIANS AND THE MONKS.

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.—2 Tim. i. 7.

This was not, however, the first time that the Merovingians had met the monks on their way.

[1] "Regali indutus purpura humiliter prostratus. . . . Qui cum nos digito designasset, in parte nos stare præcipiens, intuebatur attentius, nomen unius cujusque sciscitans. . . . Ansebaldum, qui scriptoribus testamentorum regalium præerat . . . ut de ejus annulo regali firmaret

By the side of bishops, who personified the gentle and strong majesty of the Church, and whose children the Franks had just declared themselves to be, they had everywhere discovered, sometimes isolated recluses, sometimes monks living in a community whose strange privations, painful labours, and irreproachable virtues bore eloquent witness to the moral grandeur of Christian doctrines. The life of these kings, divided between war and the chase, brought them perpetually in contact with those whom all the world agreed in calling men of God, whether in the towns and rural districts ravaged by their soldiers, or in the forests hunted by their hounds. In spite of all we have said regarding the strange and hateful mixture of deceit and ferocity, wild incontinence and savage pride, which characterised the Merovingian princes, in spite of the fatal alloy which Gallo-Roman corruption, immediately after their conversion and conquest, added to the traditional barbarity of the race, it is impossible to deny the sincerity of their faith, and the influence which Christian virtue and penitence almost always exercised upon them. They passed with a rapidity which now seems incomprehensible from the atrocious excesses of their native cruelty to passionate demonstrations of contrition and humility. After having directed massacres or exe-

more. . . . Cingulum militiæ . . . super altare mittens. . . . Rex primus de coma capitis ejus totondit. . . . Florum sibi amantissimum ad se deduci præcepit, qui . . . monachali jam indutus habitu . . . diutius in osculis ejus immoratur."—FAUSTUS, *Vit. S. Mauri*, c. 49-52.

cutions which rank among the most odious recollections of history, we see them listening with respect, and pardoning without difficulty the warning of a bold chief, or still more frequently of a pontiff or monk. For it was almost always monks or bishops who had been trained in cloistral life, who drew from them, in the name of God, a tardy and incomplete homage to justice and humanity.

Clovis himself paid repeated tribute to these virtues. The foundation of several abbeys has been attributed to him, though without sufficient proof.[1] But one charter of his is received as authentic, in which a profession of his faith in the indivisible and co-substantial Trinity, which proves his title to be considered the sole Catholic king existing in Christendom, which was then wasted by Arianism, precedes a grant of land and an exemption from imposts in favour of a monastery near Orleans, which soon became celebrated under the name of Micy, and then of St Mesmin. This last name was derived from Maximin, one of the leaders of the little colony of Arverne monks, whom Clovis established there under the direction of the holy priest Euspicius, who had gained his heart at the siege of Verdun, by his mission into the besieging camp itself to implore mercy for the Gallo-Roman insurgents in that town.[2] He had given them an estate

Clovis founds Micy, near Orleans. 508.

[1] Molosme, St Michael of Tonnerre, Nesle, &c.

[2] *Vit. S. Maximini, abb. Miciac.*, n. 4 to 9. Ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 564, ed. Venet.

belonging to the royal *fiscus* or treasury, situated at the point of the peninsula formed by the Loire and Loiret at the junction of their waters, in order, as his charter states, that these Religious should be no longer strangers and travellers among the Franks.[1]

Other monastic legends concerning Clovis.

A legend long popular in Touraine declares the fine abbatial Church of St Julian, near Tours, to mark the spot where the conqueror of the Visigoths stopped to bestow his alms, when, on horseback and with the crown on his head, he came to offer thanksgivings to St Martin for his victory at Vouillé.[2]

Another tradition, recorded by Gregory of Tours, shows still better the feeling which consoled and animated the inhabitants of Gaul, when they saw their dreaded conquerors bow before the sanctity of monks of their own race. This tradition relates that, during the march of the army of Clovis across Poitou to encounter Alaric, a band of Franks attacked a monastery, governed by a holy monk

Clovis and St Maixent. 507.

[1] "Inter Francos peregrini."—Bréquigny, who, in his great collection (*Diplomata Chartæ, &c.*, t. i, Preface, p. 8; Paris, 1791, folio), disputes all the diplomas attributed to Clovis for Reomaus, St Pierre-le-Vif, &c., acknowledges the authenticity of that given by Clovis to St Euspicius and to St Maximin for Micy. The memory of this famous abbey has been revived in our days by the secondary seminary of the diocese of Orleans, established at La Chapelle St Mesmin, not far from the site of Micy. On the opposite shore of the Loire, by an example of respect for antiquity very rare among us, the grotto where the body of St Maximin was deposited has been restored and preserved by the care of M. Collin, chief engineer of the navigation of the Loire, and has been since devoted to divine service, and inaugurated by M. Dupanloup, bishop of Orleans, 13th June 1858.

[2] Martyrology of 1469, quoted by SALMON, *Recueil des Chroniques de Touraine*, p. 53.

named Maxentius,[1] from Agde in Septimania; one of the Barbarians had raised his sword to kill the abbot, when his arm was suddenly paralysed, and his companions were struck with blindness around him. Clovis, when he heard of the miracle, hastened to the monk, and, on his knees, begged mercy for the assassins.[2] The spot where the victor of Syagrius and Alaric knelt before a Gallo-Roman monk, and acknowledged a force more invincible than all the Roman or Barbarian arms, was shown for several centuries in the church of the monastery.

But it was not always with such impunity that the monks were exposed to contact with their ferocious conquerors, and evil often fell upon them while representing religion, with all the benefits and progress that flowed from it, to the eyes of the sanguinary and covetous hordes, whose fury might sometimes be repressed by the power of a Clovis, but whose chiefs were ordinarily the first to give the example of violence. These Franks who were so zealous for orthodoxy, and who boasted of fighting for the Church against the Burgundians and Arian Visigoths, did not hesitate when their passions were inflamed to subject the most orthodox priests and monks to barbarous usage. Thus we see, in one of their invasions of Burgundy, a solitary of the famous monastery of the island Barbe,

[1] This monastery has become the town of St Maixent (Deux Sèvres).

[2] "Qui locus in quo idem princeps ad pedes sancti viri jacuerat in eodem monasterio usque in hodiernum diem apparet."—*Act. SS.* BOLLAND., *d.* 25 *Junii*, p. 172. Compare GREG. TUR., *Hist.*, lib. ii. c. 37.

The monk Leobin tortured by the Franks.

on the Saone near Lyons, given up to the most cruel tortures by a detachment of Franks who had invaded that sanctuary, called by some the most ancient in Gaul. His name was Leobin, and he had been a shepherd before he became a monk. All the other Religious had fled except himself and another old monk who, urged by the invaders to show them where the wealth of the monastery was hidden, answered that he did not know, but that Leobin was acquainted with everything. The Franks, finding that Leobin would not answer their questions, put him to the torture with an ingenious cruelty which seems to have been borrowed rather from Oriental than Germanic habits. They tied cords tightly round his head, beat him upon the soles of his feet, plunged him over and over again into the water, drawing him out only when he was almost suffocated. The courageous monk resisted all these agonies without speaking. Then they left him more dead than alive. He recovered, however, and was called some years after to the episcopal see of Chartres, by Childebert, one of the sons of Clovis, who had himself led the attack to which the pious bishop had all but fallen victim.[1]

He became Bishop of Chartres.

547-558.

Clovis had a sister named Albofled, who, baptised

[1] "Dum Francorum dura ferocitatis contra Burgundiones bella concitaret . . ."—*Vit. S. Leobini*, c. 5-14; ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. Clovis himself invaded Burgundy in 500; his sons in 523 and in 532. St Leobin having become bishop in 547, it is probable that his adventure at the Ile-Barbe relates to the last of these invasions, directed by Clotaire and Childebert.

at the same time as himself, had embraced conventual life. She died soon after, and Clovis lamented her so deeply that St Remy had to remind him of the duties of his royal charge. "There is no room," wrote the apostle of the Franks, "for lamenting that sister whose virginal flower spreads forth its perfume in the presence of God, and who has received a celestial crown as the reward of her virginity. My lord, chase this grief from your heart, your kingdom remains to you to be governed. You are the head of nations, and the weight of their government lies upon you."[1]

The sister and daughter of Clovis embrace religious life.

He had also a daughter called Theodechild, who also, as it is supposed, consecrated her virginity to God. Her existence can be traced only by some scanty lines in the works of Gregory of Tours and the other chronicles of the time. They permit us to salute her in passing as a sweet and consoling apparition amid the horrors and violence of the age in which she lived. She founded near the Gallo-Roman cathedral city of Sens a monastery in honour of St Peter and St Paul, in imitation of that which her father and mother had built near Paris, to the south of the Seine, and where St Genevieve was buried. Theodechild established monks in this

St Pierre-le-Vif at Sens.

About 507.

[1] "Sacrata non est lugenda, quæ fragrat in conspectu Domini flore virgineo, et corona tecta quam pro virginitate suscepit. . . . Dominus meus, repelle de corde tuo tristitiam . . . regnum sagacius gubernate. . . . Mœroris torpore discusso . . . manet vobis regnum administrandum. . . . Populorum caput estis et regimen sustinetis."—Ap. LABBE, *Concil.*, t. iv. p. 1268. Compare S. GREG. TUR., *Hist.*, ii. 31.

foundation, which since took the name of St Pierre-le-Vif: she chose her burial-place there, after having made a grant to them of all that she had possessed or acquired in France and Aquitaine—that is, on both sides of the Loire.[1] An act of generous pity on the part of the royal foundress worthily inaugurated the annals of this famous monastery. Basolus, who had been named Duke of Aquitaine by Gessalic, king of Aquitaine and the Visigoths, was made prisoner by Clovis in a last combat, and was conducted chained to Sens. While his guards led him to the dungeon where he expected to be put to death, he met Theodechild, the daughter of his conqueror, upon his way. She immediately resolved to beg the life and liberty of the captive. Clovis long resisted her entreaties, but yielded at length on condition that the vanquished chief should be sent to the monastery which his daughter had just established, and should have his head shaven and become a monk. Basolus appears to have adopted his new profession willingly, for he

[1] "Monachos ut, sub abbatis imperio, Deo cunctis diebus deservirent. . . . Quidquid de possesso seu de acquisito." This testament is to be found among the collections of Odorannus, a learned monk of St Pierre-le-Vif in the eleventh century, published by Cardinal Mai, in vol. ix. of his *Spicilegium Romanum*, p. 62. Fortunatus, the poet of the Merovingian princesses, wrote the epitaph of Theodechild. Odorannus quotes another epitaph as follows:—

"Hunc *regina* locum monachis construxit ab imo
Theuchildis rebus nobilitando suis.
Cujus nunc, licet hoc corpus claudatur in antro,
Spiritus astrigero vivit in axe Deo.
Implorans rectis pastoribus euge beatum
Det sapientibus hinc neumata digna Deus!"

gave to St Peter all the estates he possessed in Auvergne, and thus founded the monastery and town of Mauriac in the mountains of Cantal.[1] Monasteries of Auvergne; Basolus.

These monasteries of Auvergne and elsewhere, where the victors and vanquished often met, were already an asylum for all kinds of unfortunate persons. Gregory of Tours has preserved to us the memory of a young Arverne slave, Portianus, who, flying from the severity of his master, took refuge in a monastery: the Barbarian pursued and seized him, but, being suddenly struck with blindness, restored the fugitive to the sanctuary in order to obtain the cure he desired. The slave became a monk and then abbot, and governed the monastery, from which he came forth one day to confront and reprimand the French king Thierry, son of Clovis, in his destroying march through Auvergne.[2] After his death, the abbey, which his sanctity had made illustrious, took his name, and transmitted it to the existing town of St Pourçain.[3] Portian. About 532.

It is to Gregory of Tours again that we owe the knowledge how Thierry, king of Metz, the first-born of Clovis, and chief of these Ripuarian Franks who formed the kingdom of Austrasia, father of that Theodebert who was the protector of St Maurus, The monk and the sons of Clovis.

[1] "Mauriac is now an under-prefecture of Cantal. This monastery was restored in 1100 by Raoul of Escorailles, who placed nuns there, stipulating that all the abbesses should be chosen from his descendants."—BRANCHE, *Monastères d'Auvergne*, p. 63. Compare MABILLON, *Annal.*, lib. vi. c. 30.

[2] GREG. TURON., *Vit. Patr.*, c. 5.

[3] A district country town in Allier.

Thierry I. and the Abbot Nizier. 637.

received humbly the free remonstrances which the Abbot Nizier addressed to him publicly against the immorality of his life. Far from having any grudge against him, this king elevated him to the episcopal see of Treves. He sent several of his principal officers to the monastery to bring the abbot to Treves. At the last stage from the town, these lords turned their horses loose in the midst of the harvest. At this sight the Abbot Nizier said to them indignantly, "Withdraw your horses immediately from the harvest of the poor, or I will excommunicate you." "What!" said the Franks, amazed at the boldness of the monk, "thou art not yet a bishop, and already thou threatenest us with excommunication?" "The king," said the monk, "has brought me from my monastery to make me a bishop: let the will of God be done; but as for the will of the king, it shall not be done when it is set upon evil, at least while I can hinder it." And thereupon he himself drove the horses out of the field which they were destroying. During all his episcopate, King Thierry and his son Theodebert, who were of dissolute habits, like all the Merovingians, had to bear the apostolical zeal of Nizier. He always said, "I am ready to die for justice." He also braved the terrible Clotaire, to whom he refused the sacraments, and whose death alone delivered him from the exile to which he had been sentenced.[1]

[1] "Expellite quantocius equos vestros a segete pauperis, alioquin removebo vos a communione mea. . . . Quænam est hæc causa quam

Clodimir, king of Orleans, the second of the sons of Clovis, was similarly confronted by the noble form of a monk, Avitus, abbot of that monastery of Micy, in the Orleannais, which his father had founded, who appeared before him when, on the eve of undertaking his second campaign against the Burgundians, he desired to disembarrass himself of his prisoner, King Sigismund, who had vainly sought a refuge in his beloved cloister of Agaune. The monk came to remind him of the rights of pity, and to predict the sentence of divine justice. "Oh king!" said the abbot, "think of God: if thou givest up thy project, if thou art merciful to these captives, God will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer again; but if thou slayest them, thou and thine shall meet the same fate."[1] Clodimir answered, "It is a fool's advice to bid a man leave his enemy behind him." He killed Sigismund, his wife, and two children, and threw them into a well. But the prediction of Avitus was accomplished. Clodimir was vanquished and slain; his head, fixed at the end of a spear, was carried in triumph along the Burgundian ranks. The fate of his children is known; how his brothers Childebert and Clotaire, fortifying themselves by an expression which es-

Clodimir and the Abbot Avitus.

loqueris? Adhuc cum episcopalem apicem non es adeptus, et jam. . . . Fiat voluntas Dei: nam et regis voluntas in omnibus malis, me obsistente, non adimplebitur. . . . Libenter moriar pro justitia."—GREG. TURON., *De Vitis Patrum*, c. 17.

[1] "Si respiciens Deum emendaveris consilium tuum, ut hos homines interfici non patiaris, erit Deus tecum."—GREG. TUR., *Hist.*, lib. iii. c. 5.

caped from their mother Clotilde, who had said that she would rather see her grandchildren dead than *shaven*,[1] massacred the two eldest; and how the third escaped their knife only by receiving the monastic tonsure and the name of St Cloud, one of the best-known monastic names in our history.

St Cloud.

Childebert the friend of the monks.

These ferocious assassins nevertheless yielded in their turn to the influence of the lessons and examples given by the monks. Childebert especially would have been the monastic king *par excellence*, could we believe all the legends, which probably concentrate in him various anecdotes relative to

[1] It is probable that this had nothing to do with the monastic tonsure, but simply concerned the shortening of that long hair which was, with the Franks, as it is with the peasant of Lower Brittany at the present time, the sign of freedom, and was a special attribute of the Merovingians, and token of their dynasty and hereditary right. "Solemne est Francorum regibus nunquam tonderi. . . . Cæsaries toto decenter eis in humeros propendet."—AGATHIÆ *Histor.*, ap. THIERRY, *Récits Mérovingiens*, t. ii. p. 17. "A Merovingian prince could suffer this temporary loss in two different ways: either the hair was cut in the manner of the Franks—that is to say, to the top of the neck—or cut very short in the Roman fashion; and this kind of degradation, more humiliating than the other, was generally accompanied by the ecclesiastical tonsure."—*Ibid.* Moreover, the kings and grandees of the Merovingian era learned early and practised often the odious custom of imposing forced vocations on the dispossessed princes and inflicting the tonsure upon them against their will. The history of Merovée, son of Chilperic, and husband of Brunehaut, degraded by the tonsure at the order of Fredegonde, is universally known. Another example, still more striking, is that of Thierry III., king of Neustria, deposed in 670 by the great rebels against the tyranny of Ebroin, and succeeded by his brother Childeric II. His brother asked him what should be done to him; he answered, "What they will: unjustly deposed, I wait the judgment of the King of heaven." "Tunc ad monasterium S. martyris Dionysii residere est jussus ibique est salvatus, donec crinem quem amputaverant enutriret: et Deus cœli, quem se judicem est habere professus, feliciter postmodum ipsum permisit regnare."—*Anon. Æduen. Vit. S. Leodegarii*, c. 3.

other princes of the same name or race. Some of these are worthy of recollection from their authentic individual characteristics, or from the light they throw on contemporary history. Such a tale is that which informs us how the first king of Paris, when crossing Berry to meet the Visigoths, paused at the door of the cell occupied by the monk Eusice, and offered to him fifty pieces of gold. "Why do you give this to me?" said the old recluse; "give it to the poor; it is enough for me to be able to pray to God for my sins. However, march on, you will be victorious, and then you can do all you would." Childebert bent his heavy locks under the hand of the solitary to receive his blessing, and promised, if his prophecy was fulfilled, to return and build him a church. The prediction was fulfilled, and the king kept his promise. After he had defeated the Visigoths and taken Narbonne their capital, he built,[1] upon the banks of the Cher, a monastery and church, in which the solitary was buried. This donation was increased by the offering made by the noble Vulfin, one of the principal Franks of the army, who, in the distribution of rewards made by Childebert at the end of his campaign, having asked and obtained a

His connection with the Abbot Eusice, in Berry

[1] At Selles in Berry, near Romorantin. "Quid mihi ista profers? ... Vade et victoriam obtinebis, et quod volueris ages."—GREG. TURON., *De Glor. Confess.*, c. 82. "Crinigeram cervicem sancti manibus . . . inclinat."—DOM BOUQUET, iii. 129. Eusice began his career as a monk at Perrecy, in Burgundy (*Patriciacum*), which at a later period became one of the most celebrated priories of the Benedictine order.

grant of crown lands, or what was already called an *honour*, upon the same banks of the Cher, hastened to pay this tribute to the holy monk by whose fame he had been fascinated.[1]

This Eusice or Eusitius must have been, according to the evidence of his name, of Roman or Gallo-Roman origin, like all the other monks whom we have noted up to this point; but Childebert entertained friendly relations of the same kind with another monk whose name, Marculph, points him out as a Frank, and who was the first of all the holy monks whose name betrayed that origin.[2] He was of a rich and powerful race established in the country of Bayeux, and the union of the proud independence of the Frank with the rigorous austerity of the monk is everywhere apparent in the narrative of his life. He had devoted the first half of his existence to preaching the faith to the inhabitants of Cotentin; from thence we see him set out, mounted on his ass, to meet King Childebert on the day of a great festival, in the midst of his feudal lords, and asking of him a grant of land on which to build a monastery where the king and the commonwealth of the Franks might be prayed

And with the Frankish abbot Marculph, in Neustria.

[1] "Vulfinus ejusdem generis vir nobilissimus . . . remunerationis suæ præmium . . . præstolabatur . . . nihil petiit sibi dari nisi super Chari fluvium quem rex habebat honorem."—*Vit. S. Eusicii*, ap. LABBE, *Nov. Bibl. MSS.*, ii. 375.

[2] Among the holy monks whose name indicates a German origin, I see before Marculph or Marcoul, who died in 558, only Théodoric or Thierry, who died in 533, a disciple of St Remy, the first great abbot of the great monastery near Reims, which retains his name, and from which William of St Thierry, the annalist of the twelfth century, derives his.

for. It was not the habitual adulation of the Romans of the Lower Empire which he used to gain the monarch's ear. "Mercy and peace to thee, from Jesus Christ," he said, "illustrious prince: thou art seated on the throne of royal majesty, but thou shouldst not forget that thou art mortal, and that pride must not make thee despise thy fellow-creatures. Recall to thy mind that text of the wise man: 'Men have made thee a prince; be not exalted, but be as one of them in the midst of them.' Be just even in thy clemency, and mix pity even with thy justice." Childebert granted his request. But scarcely had he accomplished this first foundation, when, for the better enjoyment of the charms of solitude, Marculph took refuge in an island on the coast of Brittany, inhabited only by a handful of fishers. A numerous band of Saxon pirates having made a descent upon this island, the poor Bretons came trembling and kneeling to the Frank monk. "Be of good courage," he said to them; "if you trust my counsel, take your weapons, march against your enemy, and the God who overthrew Pharaoh will fight for you." They listened to him, put the Saxons to flight, and a second foundation marks the spot of that victory achieved over the piratical pagans by innocence and faith, inspired by the courage of a monk.[1]

Marculph puts the Saxon pirates to flight.

[1] "Ex nobilissimis ditissimisque christianissimis Bajocassinis civibus exortus. . . . Asello cui sedere consueverat ascenso. . . . Cum Rex multa suorum procerum turba. . . . Licet in solio majestatis sedeas, tamen te unum mortalium esse considerans. . . . Tibi subditis et cum

These Saxons who troubled the solitude of the holy Marculph in his island had long invaded and sacked Great Britain. To escape from their bloody yoke an army of British monks, guiding an entire tribe of men and women, freemen and slaves, embarked in vessels not made of wood, but of skins sewn together,[1] singing or rather howling, under their full sails, the lamentations of the Psalmist,[2] and came to seek an asylum in Armorica, and make for themselves another country. This emigration

Emigration of British monks into Armorica.

460-550

justitia parcis, et cum pietate corrigis. . . . Pro tua totiusque reipublicæ salute sedulo oraturi. . . . Piratæ . . . ex inexhaustis scaturiginibus gentis Saxonicæ prorumpentes. . . . Si meis vultis acquiescere monitis, arma constanter capessite. . . . Pro vobis ipse pugnabit, qui quondam Pharaonem," &c.—*Acta SS. O. S. B.*, tom. i. pp. 120, 124. This island, called *Agnus* or *Agna* in the two lives of St Marculph, is probably that of Harme or Herms, near Guernsey. The translation of the relics of St Marcoul, in the ninth century, proved the foundation of the great monastery of Corbéni (*Corpus Benedictum*), between Laon and Reims, where the kings of France went to pray after their coronation and obtained power to cure scrofula, saying, "The king touches thee, God cures thee."

[1] "Quin et Armoricus piratam Saxona tractus
Sperabat; cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo."
SID. APOLLIN., *Paneg. ad Avitum*, v. 369.

Festus Avienus, who lived at the end of the fourth century, in his curious poem, entitled *Ora Maritima*, speaks also of these leather boats used by the British:—

"Navigia junctis semper aptant pellibus,
Corioque vastum sæpe percurrunt salum."
Edit. Panckoucke, p. 110.

Legendary lore has sometimes transformed them into troughs of stone, which, after having been used as beds by the holy missionaries during their solitary life in Great Britain, served them as skiffs to cross the British Channel, and land in Armorica. See the legends of St Ninnoc and St Budoc, in the *Propre* or special prayers of the ancient dioceses of Dol and Leon. ALBERT LE GRAND, *Vie des SS. de Bretagne*, ed. Miorcec de Kerdanet, 1839.

[2] "Cum ululatu magno ceu celeusmatis vice, hoc modo sub velorum sinibus cantantes: *Dedisti nos tanquam oves escarum.*"—GILDAS, *De Excidio Britanniæ.*

lasted more than a century; and threw a new, but equally Celtic population into that portion of Gaul which Roman taxation and Barbarian invasion had injured least, and where the ancient Celtic worship had retained most vitality.

Persistence of paganism in Armorica.

With the exception of three or four episcopal cities, almost all the Armorican peninsula was still pagan in the sixth century. All the symbols and rights, the myths and arcanas of paganism seemed to be concentrated in that wild and misty country, where the avenues and circles of erect stones, the *dolmens* and *menhirs*, rose, sometimes amid immense forests of oak and holly, or moors covered by impenetrable thickets of furze, sometimes upon the high granite rocks of that coast, rent and hollowed out by the unwearied ocean tides which beat upon it from the north, south, and west. In one of the isles of this extremity of Gaul, Homer and Plutarch have placed the prison where Saturn was held captive by his son Jupiter, under the guard of the giant Briareus. Here too, according to most of the poets, was the dwelling-place of the genii and the heroes, the garden of the Hesperides and the Elysian fields. Elsewhere, but still in the same archipelago of almost inaccessible islands, the Druidesses celebrated at night, and by torchlight, those mysteries, which, like those of Eleusis and Samothrace, were shut out from the approach of man, and filled with terror the soul of the boatman who beheld them from afar. Human sacri-

Poetic traditions.

fices, and especially those of children, were practised here, as among the Carthaginians, in honour of Saturn.[1] Other priestesses, vowed like the Roman Vestals to perpetual virginity, and, like the German Velleda, invested with the gift of prophecy, raised and calmed the sea at their pleasure, cured diseases, and foretold future events to those who were bold enough to consult them in their island of Sein, situated at the furthest point of Armorica, upon that frightful coast of Cornouaille, bristling with rocks, in that bay which is still called the *Bay of the Dead*, and where popular tradition sees the skeletons of the shipwrecked wandering by night asking a shroud and a grave.[2]

Tradition has never failed to people the coasts of Armorica with phantoms. It was there, according to Claudian, that Ulysses offered libations of blood to the manes of his fathers, troubling the repose of the dead; there that the husbandman hears incessantly the plaintive accents and faint sound made by the manes whose flight agitates the air, and where pale phantoms wander before his terrified eyes.

> "Est locus extremum qua pandit Gallia littus,
> Oceani prætentus aquis, ubi fertur Ulysses,
> Sanguine libato, populum movisse silentem.
> Illic umbrarum tenui stridore volantum
> Flebilis auditur questus, simulacra coloni
> Pallida defunctasque vident migrare figuras." [3]

[1] See the legend of St Riok.

[2] ARTEMIDORUS, apud STRABON., lib. iv. p. 198; POMPONIUS MELA, lib. iii. c. 6; HERSART DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *Chants Populaires de la Bretagne*, t. ii., *La Fiancée en Enfer*.

[3] *In Rufinum*, lib. i. v. 123.

This tradition lasted till the end of the sixth century, and extended to the extremities of the Roman world. Procopius, the contemporary of the sons of Clovis, narrates that the fishermen who inhabited these coasts had been exempted by the conquering Franks from the payment of tribute, because they were obliged to convey the souls of the defunct to Great Britain. "Towards midnight," says the Byzantine historian, "some one knocks at their door; they are called in a low voice; they rise and hasten to the shore; they find there strange boats, in which they see no one, but which they must row across the sea; and these boats are so full of invisible passengers that they seem ready to sink, and are scarcely a finger-breadth above the level of the water. In less than an hour the journey is accomplished, though in their own boats they could scarcely do it in a night. Arrived at the end, the vessels are so entirely emptied that you can see their keel. All remain invisible; but the sailors hear a voice which calls the travelling souls one by one, addressing each by the title which it has borne, and adding to this the name of its father, or, if a woman, of her husband."[1]

Upon this soil, long adopted by legendary poetry

[1] "Intempesta nocte . . . se ad opus obscura voce acciri audiunt . . . apprehendunt remos et naves sentiunt tot vectoribus onustas ut ad summam usque tabulam immersæ. . . . Nullum vident nec navigantem nec navi egredientem: solum asserunt audire se vocem, quæ vectorum singulorum nomina tradere excipientibus. . . . Si quæ feminæ . . . viros . . . nominatim inclamant."—PROCOP., *De Bello Gothico*, lib. iv. c. 20.

as its special possession, a swarm of monastic missionaries descended at the head of a population already Christian. They came to ask shelter from their brethren, issued from the same race and speaking the same language. The leaders of the British monks who disembarked with their army of disciples upon the Armorican shore, undertook to pay for the hospitality they received by the gift of the true faith, and they succeeded. They gave their name and worship to their new country. They preached Christianity in the language common to all the Celtic races, and resembling that which is still spoken by the peasants of Lower Brittany. They implanted in the Armorican Britain, in this Brittany of ours, that faith which remains so firmly rooted there. "The sun," says a Breton monk of the seventeenth century, apostrophising one of these prophets from beyond the sea, "has never lighted a country where, since you banished idolatry, the true faith has been held with more constant and unchanging faithfulness. For thirteen centuries no kind of infidelity has stained the language by means of which you preached Jesus Christ, and the man has yet to be born who has heard a Breton preach in the Breton tongue any other than the Catholic faith." [1]

Conversion of Armorica by the British emigrants.

This peaceful conquest was not made without re-

[1] "Le soleil n'a jamais éclairé de canton où ayt paru une plus constante et invariable fidélité dans la vraye foy, depuis que vous en avez banni l'idolastrie. Il y a treize siècles qu'aucune espèce d'infidélité n'a souillé la langue qui vous a servy d'organe pour prescher Jésus-Christ, et il est à

sistance. The British monks encountered enemies upon the soil of Gaul almost as terrible as those from whose persecution they fled. Celtic paganism defended itself desperately. The bards attempted to rouse the people against the strangers who audaciously brought a new religion into the inviolable sanctuary of Druidism. The prophetic menaces launched by one of these poets of the old religion against the new apostles has often been quoted: "A day comes when the men of Christ shall be pursued, when they shall be hunted like deer. They shall die by bands and battalions. Then the mill-wheel shall grind small; the blood of the monks shall serve as water to turn it."[1]

Resistance of the pagan bards.

Thirteen centuries passed before new pagans, a thousand times more atrocious and less excusable than the compatriots of the bard Gwenchlan, appeared to verify that prophecy. But in olden time it seemed to die out under the success and blessings with which the British monks had covered Armorica.

They also carried with them their poetry, which shortly superseded the Druidical poetry, purifying without effacing it. For they also, faithful to the immemorial traditions of the Celtic race, had bards in their ranks. The famous Taliesin, who took the title of prince of the bards, prophets, and Druids

Monastic bards.

naistre qui ayt vu un Breton bretonnant prescher une autre religion que la Catholique."—Father MAUNOIR, *Epistre au glorieux St Corentin*, 1659.

[1] HERSART DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *Chants Populaires de la Bretagne*, vol. i. pp. 20, 38.

of the West, and who is supposed to have been converted by the monk Gildas, accompanied them into Armorica.[1] But bards who have since taken their place among the Saints were pointed out among this number. Such was Sulio, or Ysulio, who, while still a child playing in the gardens of his father, the Lord of Powys, heard monks passing, harp in hand, singing the praises of God, and was so fascinated with the beauty of their hymns that he followed them to learn how to compose and sing these noble songs. His brothers hastened to announce his flight to their father, who sent thirty armed men, with orders to slay the abbot and bring back his son. But the child had already gone to Armorica and found refuge in the monastery of which, at a later period, he was prior.[2]

Ysulio.

The blind Herve.

Such was also Herve, whose name ought to take place among the sweetest recollections of Christian poetry. He was the son of the bard Hyvernion, who had appeared among the numerous minstrels whom the Merovingian kings loved to collect round their table.[3] This island bard had charmed King Childebert; "he was," says the old Breton legend,

[1] INGOMAR, *Vit. Judicaelis*, apud D. MORICE, *Hist. de Bretagne*, proofs, vol. i. Compare LA VILLEMARQUÉ, p. 9, and KERDANET, editor of ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 218.

[2] DOM LOBINEAU, *Vie des Saints de Bretagne*, p. 253; LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[3] The Italian Fortunatus has preserved to us the remembrance of these concerts, where, with lyre in hand, he took his part, whilst "the Barbarian," says he, "played on the harp, the Greek on the instrument of Homer, and the Breton on the Celtic rote."—LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *Légende Celtique*, p. 232.

"so perfect a musician and composer of ballads and songs."[1] He had come to Armorica to marry a young orphan of Leon, whom an angel had showed him in a dream, saying to him, "You shall meet her to-morrow, upon your way, near the fountain; her name is Rivanonn." He met her accordingly; she was of the same profession as himself, and sang, "Although I am but a poor flower on the waterside, it is I who am called the Little Queen of the Fountain." He married her, and of this marriage was born a blind child, whom his parents named Herve (that is, *bitter*), and who, from the age of seven, went about the country seeking alms and singing the hymns composed by his mother. The blind orphan was afterwards initiated by his uncle into cenobitical life, and was placed at the head of the school adjoining his monastery, where he could put in practice the aphorism which Breton tradition ascribes to him, "*It is better to instruct a little child than to gather wealth for him;*"[2] and where he taught his pupils songs, of which the modern Breton still retains some trace in the following childish version:—

"Approach, my little children; come and hear a new song which I have composed expressly for you; take pains to remember it entirely.

"When you awake in your bed, offer your heart

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, *Vie des Saints de Bretagne*, ed. Kerdanet, p. 313.

[2] The following is another of his aphorisms:—"He who does not answer to the rudder must answer to the rocks."

to the good God, make the sign of the cross, and say with faith, hope, and love:

"Say: My God, I give thee my heart, my body, and my soul; make me to be a good man, or else to die before my time.

"When you see a raven fly, think that the devil is as black and as wicked; when you see a little white dove fly, think that your angel is as sweet and as white."

After the conversion of the country, the missionary bishops, compatriots of the father of Herve, would have drawn him from his retreat to confer the priesthood upon him, and to give him a seat in their synods. But he always preferred his little monastery hidden in the woods. Although blind, he had himself been the architect of his little church, the care of which he intrusted to a very young girl, his niece or cousin, educated by his mother, and named Christina, "a Christian in name as in fact,"[1] whom the Breton legend, placing her amid the disciples of the saint, compares to a little white dove among the crows.[2] Three days before his death, when secluded in the church which he had built, he was thrown into an ecstasy. The eyes of the poor blind man opened to contemplate the heaven over his head; and he began to sing a last song, which is still repeated in his country:—

[1] Albert le Grand, p. 321, ed. Miorcec.
[2] La Villemarqué, p. 279.

"I see heaven opened; heaven, my country, I would fly to it. . . . I see there my father and mother in glory and beauty; I see my brethren, the men of my own country. Choirs of angels, supported by wings, float round their heads like so many bees in a flowery field."

The third day after this vision, he told Christina to make his bed, not as usually, but with a stone for the pillow and ashes for the couch. "When the black angel shall come to seek me, let him find me lying upon ashes." Christina, while she obeyed, said to him, "My uncle, if you love me, ask God that I may follow you without delay, as the boat follows the current." Her prayer was granted. At the moment when Herve expired, the little Christina, "throwing herself at his feet, died there also."[1] Herve, the blind monk, continues to our own day the patron of mendicant singers, who still chant his legend in Breton verse; and there has long been shown, in a little church in Lower Brittany,[2] a worm-eaten oaken cradle, in which the bard and his poet-wife, whom God made the parents of Herve, put him to sleep with their songs.[3] This

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 321.

[2] At St Jean-Keran, parish of Tréflaouénan.

[3] This beautiful legend of St Herve, which is so popular in Bretagne, formerly related with charming simplicity, from the ancient Breton breviaries, by the Dominican Albert de Morlaix (1636), and reproduced after him by the Bollandists, in volume v. of June, p. 365, has been recently revised, with as much taste as learning, by the Viscount Hersart de la Villemarqué, member of the Institute, in his *Légende Celtique* (St Brieuc, 1859). To this is added the Breton version of the legend in verse, and some poems attributed to the saint.

poetry is surely of as much value as that of Claudian and the Druids.

But we must leave the too attractive regions of poetry to return to the domain of history, which is often, and here especially, to be distinguished with difficulty from that of the legend. Without entering into details of the immigration of these Bretons into Armorica, it is enough to say that fifty years after their appearance the Gospel reigned in the peninsula. Monks, either cenobites or solitary, held the place of all the other clergy for several centuries, and exercised over the soul and imagination of the Armorican people a priestly empire which still continues. Innumerable monasteries rose on all the principal points of the territory, especially on the sea-coast. Among those which date back to this age, we must note Rhuys, which was afterwards made illustrious by becoming the retreat of Abelard. It was founded at that time upon the peninsula of Morbihan, by one of the most distinguished British emigrants, the Abbot Gildas, called *the Wise*, and this abbey reckoned among its monks the Saxon Dunstan, who had been carried away from his native island by pirates, and became, under the name of Goustan, the special patron of sailors, as is shown by the verses still sung by the sailors' wives of Croisic :—

Armorican monasteries.

"St Goustan
Notre ami,
Ramenez nos maris :

St Goustan
Notre amant,
Ramenez nos parents."

At the extreme point of the peninsula and of Gaul, on the height of the promontory so fitly named Finisterre, rose an abbey in honour of St Matthew the Evangelist, whose head had been stolen from Egypt by the Armorican navigators, and which long bore the name of St Matthew of the Land's End. The terrible rocks at its feet are still called the Monks, and an archipelago of neighbouring islands has received the Breton name of Aber-Beniguet (or Benedict), in memory, perhaps, of the patriarch of the monks of the West. Those of St Matthew kept up a lighthouse for the safety of mariners in these dangerous seas, opposite that terrible strait of the Raz, which no man, according to the Breton saying, ever passed without fear or grief, and which has inspired the well-known distich: "My God, help me to cross the Raz, for my boat is so little, and the sea is so great!" [1]

St Matthew of the Land's End.

But the most ancient and celebrated of all these sanctuaries was that of Landevenec, which became the most active centre for the extension of Christianity, as well as of manual and literary labour, in Western Gaul. Its founder was Guennolé, born in Armorica of an emigrant father, who, after having

Monastic school of Landevenec.

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, pp. 203 and 209. Compare *Vie de St Tanneguy*, p. 771, who founded this abbey, and is supposed to have been one of the family of Chastel, of which Tanneguy du Chastel was the great representative in the fifteenth century.

passed three years upon a rock beaten by the waves, chose for his disciples a wooded site hidden in a creek of the road of Brest, with an exposure towards the rising sun, sheltered from the terrible west wind, where the sea sighed at the feet of delicious gardens. His biographer has preserved to us the impression made upon the Breton monks by this dwelling-place, which appeared a paradise to them after the bleak and cold coasts where they had been hitherto established. "One could not die there," he says; and, in order that the Religious might see the end of their pilgrimage, Guennolé had to change their habitation to a site further off, but still to the east, where death was restored to its rights, but where, for long, the monks died only according to their age.[1]

The name of Guennolé continues popular in Brittany, like that of many other holy abbots, come from beyond seas, or born in Armorica of emigrant parents. It is impossible to enumerate their works.[2]

[1] "Locus erat amœnissimus, ab omni vento intangibilis nisi ab orientali, velut quidam paradisus ad ortum solis conspicuus. . . . Primum per annos singulos in flores et germina prorumpens, ultima folia amittens . . . hortus omnigeno florum colore decoratus. . . . In eo ubi erant loco mori non poterant, licet fierent seniores. Rogato itaque super his S. Guingaleo, transierunt in alium locum ad ortum solis. . . . Extunc vero inceperunt assumi a Domino e senioribus patres, qui primi erant."—GURDESTAN, *Vita S. Winevaloci*, ap. BOLLAND, t. i. Martii, pp. 259, 260. It is supposed that Guennolé had been educated by St Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, and that the rule followed at Landevenec was that of St Columba, or Colomb-Kill, of whom there shall be further mention. The Benedictine rule was only introduced there under Louis le Debonnaire.

[2] This is so much the less to be regretted, as the subject has been nobly

Let us only state that the principal communities formed by these monastic missionaries were soon transformed into bishoprics. Such, especially, was Dol, destined to become the ecclesiastical metropolis of Armorica, and founded by Samson, perhaps the most illustrious among the numerous apostles of the British emigration. Samson of Dol, and his six suffragans, all monks, missionaries and bishops like himself—namely, Paul of Leon, Tugdual of Treguier, Corentin of Quimper, Paterne of Vannes, Brieuc and Malo, of the two dioceses which have taken and retained their names—have been sometimes called the Seven Saints of Brittany. An anecdote, told of the Bishop Paterne, may be quoted as a curious example of the subordination of the suffragans to their metropolitan: Having received at Vannes the letter of St Samson, convoking a provincial synod, "as he was taking off his boots, having still a boot upon one foot, he read it on the moment, and, incontinently getting to horse, followed the messengers, and presented himself at the synod with one boot!"[1] Paterne, as his name indicates, was the only one of these saints who was not of insular British race, as

Monasteries transformed into bishoprics.

Dol.

The Seven Saints of Brittany, monks and bishops.

nobly treated by M. de la Borderie, in his *Discours sur les Saints de Bretagne*, at the Congress of Lorient, October 2, 1848. He has collected there the best part of the varied and instructive details interspersed through the lives of the saints published in the *Acta SS.* by Mabillon and by the Bollandists. The verdict of the latter upon all the Breton legends ought not, however, to be omitted; "Ad stuporem magis quam ad imitationem collecta."—Tom. vi. Junii, p. 572.

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 248.

Vannes was the only diocese among the seven which did not owe its origin to a monastery of British emigrants.[1]

Although Armorica, thus converted and repeopled by British emigrants, had never been entirely conquered by the Franks, and was governed by the native and independent Counts of Vannes, Cornouaille, Leon, and Treguier, it recognised in some degree the supremacy of Childebert, whose share of the territories of Clovis extended farthest to the west.

This incomplete and ephemeral supremacy of the Frank kings,[2] which was afterwards re-established with difficulty by Dagobert and Louis the Debonnaire, seems to have been specially recognised and appealed to by the British missionaries. Tugdual, abbot and founder of Treguier, was raised to the episcopate only with the consent of Childebert, in whose court he was at the time of his election. The same was the case in respect to Paul Aurelian, first bishop of Leon, and recognised as such by Childebert, upon the express request of the count of the province.[3] Finally, the metropolitan Samson, being still only abbot of Dol, had to interfere

Their intercourse with Childebert.

[1] Nantes and Rennes were of Gallo-Roman origin, and dependencies of the metropolis of Tours.

[2] "Francorum quidem regibus cætera subditi, at semper vacui tributo," says Procopius in the passage quoted above on the inhabitants of the sea-shore.

[3] BOLLAND., t. ii. Mart., p. 119. "The holy Abbot Armel, one of the apostles of Lower Brittany, lived for seven years in the neighbourhood of Childebert."—*Propr. Venetense*, ap. ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 523.

in his own person with Childebert to obtain the deliverance of one of the native princes, who had been robbed of his inheritance and imprisoned by a tyrannical lieutenant of the Frank king.[1] Childebert, in spite of the violent resistance of the queen, whose antrustion this officer was, granted the prayer of the British missionary, and overwhelmed him with gifts and honours. He had even, according to tradition, placed in perpetuity, under the sway of the monastery of Dol, various of the Channel islands, among others that of Jersey, then deserted, and which has since, thanks to monastic culture, become a marvel of fertility and agricultural wealth, with a population six times more dense than that of France.

By one of these contrasts so frequent in the history of the Merovingians, the Queen Ultrogoth, whom the legend of St Samson represents as furious against the monastic missionary, is extolled by others as the faithful coadjutrice of the monks.[2] She is always associated by the gratitude of monks and believers with the memory of her husband, for having joined with him in founding, at the gates of Paris, the great monastery, afterwards so cele-

Foundation of St Germain-des-Prés by Childebert and Ultrogoth.

[1] "Dicunt ei injustum super eos, ac violentum, externumque judicem venisse."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 167. It is this officer who is called in the legends of S. Samson, S. Juval, S. Leonor, S. Tugdual, and S. Herve, *Conomor* or *Kon-mor*—that is to say, the *Great Chief*. He governed Domnonia, which comprised almost all Armorica, and was taken into the private service of Queen Ultrogoth, or, as the Franks say, into her *trust*. Compare DOM LOBINEAU, *Saints de Bretagne*, pp. 59, 91, 94, 105, 111, ed. of 1725.

[2] "Adjutrix fidelis monachorum."—*Ann. Bened.*, lib. v. c. 43.

brated under the name of St Germain-des-Prés. This church, which appears to have been one of the finest monuments of the Merovingian age, the organs and painted glass of which, two beautiful creations of Catholic art,[1] were even then admired, had first been built by Childebert in honour of the martyr St Vincent, whose tunic he had carried off from the Arian Visigoths at the time of his victorious invasion of Spain. He bestowed it upon the monks with the consent of the Bishop of Paris, Germain, himself a monk, and formerly abbot of St Symphorian of Autun.

Exchange of agricultural products between the Parisian and Breton abbeys.

"One day," says the Breton legend, "the Abbot of Dol and the Bishop of Paris talked together about their monasteries. . . . St Samson said that his monks were such good managers, and so careful of their beehives, that besides the honey, of which they had an abundant supply, they had more wax than they could use in the church during the whole year; but that the country not being fit for the growth of vines, they had a great dearth of wine. And we, on the contrary, said St Germain, have vineyards in abundance, and a much greater quantity of wine than is wanted for the supply of the monastery; but we are obliged to buy wax for the church. If it pleases you, we will give you every year the tenth part of our wine, and you shall furnish us with wax to light our church. Samson accepted the offer, and the two monaste-

[1] VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS, *Carmina*, ii. 10 and 11.

ries mutually accommodated each other during the life of the saints."[1]

Popularity of St Germain, monk and bishop.

The Parisian abbey afterwards received the name of St Germain, who continued always a monk in the exercise of his episcopal charge,[2] and who himself exempted the new monastery from episcopal jurisdiction. As long as he lived he exercised the most salutary influence over the Merovingian kings. He consequently became one of the most popular saints that the monastic order has given to the Church; and the Parisians long narrated, among other tales of his inexhaustible charity, how, "esteeming the voice of the poor more than the gift of the king," he had sold,[3] in order to buy back a slave, the costly horse which the king had given him, charging him to keep it for himself.

Childebert died in his arms, and was buried in the church of the monastery which he had endowed so richly, with the consent of all the Frankish and Neustrian chiefs.[4] At his death his brother Clotaire became the sole king of the Frank monarchy. He too, despite his too certain ferocity, had known

Clotaire and St Medard.

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 422.

[2] "Adeptus gradum curæ pastoralis, de reliquo monachus persistebat." —ALBERT LE GRAND, *Vit. S. Germani*, c. 12.

[3] *Chroniques de St Denys*, liv. iii. c. 5. Compare VENANT. FORT., c. 22.

[4] "Cum consensu et voluntate Francorum et Neustrasiorum." The authenticity of this famous charter, so often disputed, has been maintained by Mabillon. The dedication took place on the same day as the death of the king, December 23, 558. This date is confirmed by M. Guerard in his admirable edition of the *Polyptique d'Irminon*, t. i. p. 907-913. The first abbot was Droctoveus, whom Germain brought from his ancient monastery of St Symphorian, at Autun.

and loved the monks: he also desired to be buried in the church of the monastery which he had founded in his capital of Soissons under the name of St Medard, which was that of a great bishop (the son of a Frank and a Roman woman) whose virtues he had admired, and whose words he had sometimes listened to. He testified his faith and his too just terrors, when dying, in these words, which Gregory of Tours has preserved to us: "What must be the power of that King of heaven, who makes the most powerful kings of the earth die thus as he pleases?"[1]

Gregory of Tours and the sons of Clotaire.

The great figure of St Gregory of Tours overshadows all the second generation of the descendants of Clovis and those bloody struggles between the sons of Clotaire, of which he has left an undying picture in his famous narrative, restored and sometimes altered by the pen of the greatest historian of our day.[2] Some have looked on him as a monk,[3] and we would fain feel ourselves entitled to claim his pure glory for the monastic order; what is certain is, that he was by far the most honest and illustrious person of the times which he has described. Saddened and sometimes deeply discouraged by those horrors of which he was the witness and annalist, his soul was always superior to his fortune, and even to his talents. Without losing

[1] *Hist. Eccl. Franc.*, iii. 21.

[2] *Récits Mérovingiens*, by M. Augustin Thierry, who has, however, rendered full homage to the talent and character of his model.

[3] "Haud constat," says Mabillon, *Ann. Bened.*, lib. viii. c. 62.

sight of that profound respect for the sovereign power with which the traditions of his family and his Roman predilections inspired him, he never hesitated to make a stand when it was necessary against the grandsons of Clovis, and especially against Chilperic, whom he called the Herod and Nero of his age; an atrocious and ridiculous tyrant, who dreamt, among all his crimes, of increasing the number of the letters of the alphabet, and of reducing that of the persons of the Trinity.

Gregory laboured with all his might, not for monarchical unity, which no one dreamt of in these days, but for the union of the Merovingian race as the sole means of consolidating and justifying the sway of the Franks in Gaul. The history of France has inspired few finer pages than this preamble to his fifth book, in which, addressing himself to all those princes unbridled alike in ferocity and profligacy, he exclaims :—

"I am weary of narrating all the changes of these civil wars, which waste the kingdom and nation of the Franks. . . . What are you doing, O kings? What would you? What seek you? What is wanting to you? You inhabit delightful houses, your cellars overflow with wine, corn, and oil, and your coffers with gold and silver. One thing alone you lack, the grace of God, because you will not have peace. Why will you always take or covet the goods of others? . . . If civil war is sweet to thee, O king! give thyself to that which the

Apostle has revealed to us in the heart of man, to the war of the spirit against the flesh; overcome thy vices by thy virtues: and then, enfranchised, thou shalt freely serve Christ, who is thy chief, after having been the bond-slave of evil."[1]

Amid the lifelike and varied narratives of the father of our history, it would be easy to glean facts which belong to our subject, and to show among the grandsons of Clovis, some who, like Gontran of Burgundy,[2] and Sigebert of Austrasia, were the friends of the monks and founders of new monasteries; and some who, like Chilperic and his son during their incursions south of the Loire, abandoned the monastic sanctuaries to the flames, the monks

[1] "Si ite, o rex! bellum civile delectat, illud quod Apostolus in hominem agi meminit, exerce, *ut spiritus concupiscat adversus carnem* (*Galat.* v. 17), et vitia virtutibus cedant; et tu, liber, capiti tuo, id est, Christo, servias, qui quondam radici malorum servieras compeditus."—*Lib.* v., *Prologus.*

[2] Gontran, son of Clotaire I., King of Orleans, afterwards of Burgundy, founded, about 577, at the gate of his new capital of Châlon-sur-Saône, a celebrated abbey under the patronage of St Marcel, at the very place where this martyr was immolated by the Romans, and where he remained for three days alive, half buried in a pit, praying for his executioners, and for that land of Burgundy which he fertilised with his blood. In his deed of endowment, Gontran says—"I see with grief that as a punishment of your sins the churches built for the service of God fall to decay by the excessive ambition of the princes, and the too great neglect of the prelates." He desired the new abbey to be regulated after the model of Agaune, the great monastery of the Burgonde kingdom, which had preceded Merovingian Burgundy, and consequently introduced there the *Laus Perennis.* He followed the same course at St Benigne, a monastery erected at Dijon over the tomb of another apostle and martyr of Burgundy. Gontran caused himself to be interred in the monastery which he had founded, as his father Clotaire had been at St Médard, and his uncle Childebert at St Germain-des-Prés. St Marcel, converted into a priory of the order of Cluny in 1060, has since been celebrated as the scene of the retreat and death of Abelard.

to death or exile, and the nuns to the brutal insults of their soldiers.[1] It will be better worth our while to suspend that arid nomenclature, and pause a moment upon the noble attitude of a Gallo-Roman monk,[2] whom Gregory knew well, whose history he has related to us, and in whom monastic life seems to have developed a lively and tender solicitude for the misery of his fellow-citizens.

Aredius, chancellor of Theodebert, becomes a monk.

Aredius, born at Limoges of an exalted family, had been recommended or given as a hostage, in his childhood, to the Frank king Theodebert, the same whom we have seen giving so cordial a welcome to the sons of St Benedict at Glanfeuil. Aredius soon brought himself into so much favour with this prince that he became his secretary, or, as it was already called, his chancellor.[3] This was an office which then began to acquire great importance, and the holders of which repeatedly

[1] GREG. TURON., iv. 48.

[2] *Hist. Eccl. Francor.*, lib. x. c. 29. Two other Lives of St Aredius also exist (ap. BOLLAND., t. vi. August., p. 175). The first and shortest, *Vita prima*, is by an anonymous contemporary. The second, *Vita prolixior*, is attributed by Mabillon, who has published it in his *Analecta* (p. 198), to Gregory of Tours himself; but Ruinart (*Opera Greg. Tur.*, p. 1285) and the Bollandists have shown that this was incorrect. However, Gregory speaks of him in several other parts of his works. (*Hist. Franc.*, lib. viii. c. 15 and 27. *De Mirac. S. Juliani*, c. 40. *De Virtut. S. Martini.*, ii. 39. *De Gloria Confess.*, c. 9.)

[3] "Parentela nobili generatus. . . . Nobilissima videlicet origine. . . . Valde ingenuus. . . . Theodeberto regi traditus, aulicis palatinis adjungitur. . . . Ut cancellarius prior ante conspectum regis adsisteret. . . . Cancellarii sortitus officium."—*Ubi supra.* Le Huerou, founding upon some document whose origin he does not state (Sanctus Aridius, Lemovicensis abbas, apud Theodebertum cancellarius, *quæ prior erat militia palatina*), says that this charge was the most eminent post in the Court of the Merovingians.—*Instit. Merov.*, i. 383.

entered the ranks of the monastic order. That monk, called Nizier, who had become bishop of Treves, and whose courage and humanity we have already recorded, imagined that he saw the stamp of celestial grace in the face of the young courtier whom he met in the palace. He led him to his cell, where he spoke to him of God, and in bringing him to a knowledge of religious truth, inspired him with an inclination for cloistral life. A dove who, during these confidential interviews, came incessantly to the young and gentle Aredius to perch on his head or shoulder, still further convinced the prelate that the Holy Spirit was to inspire his pupil.[1] He permitted him, however, to return to his own country, to his mother Pelagia, who had no children but himself. But when he returned to his native Limousin, Aredius took no thought of his fields or his vineyards, which he gave up to his mother, charging her to provide for the subsistence of the little community which he formed on one of his estates, filling up its numbers principally from the people of his house,[2] and which

[1] "Nescio quid in vultu ejus cernens divinum. . . . Cum ingressi in cellulam de iis quæ ad Deum pertinent confabularentur . . ."—GREG. TUR., loc. cit.

[2] "Sive exercitium agrorum, sive cultus vinearum . . . Ex familia propria tonsuratos instruit monachos."—*Ibid.* In his *History*, Gregory says that he followed the rules of Cassianus, St Basil, and other abbots, *qui monasterialem vitam instituerunt.* He makes no special mention of St Benedict; but in the *Vita prolixior*, written by an eyewitness of the miracles which were performed on the tomb of Aredius at the end of the sixth century, everything bears the stamp of the Benedictine rule. Compare BOLLAND., loc. cit.

became the origin of a town, named after him St Yrieix.[1]

He had first intended to seclude himself in a cavern, but, at the prayer of his mother, he transferred his monastery to a more agreeable site. He divided his time between agricultural labour and study; he specially transcribed with his own hand copies of the Holy Scriptures and liturgical books, which he took pleasure in distributing among the churches of the neighbouring dioceses. The poor and the sick crowded to him like bees to the hive.[2] He helped the one and cured the other. He went to Tours every year out of his cloister to celebrate the feast of St Martin, and, with many prayers, to kiss the tomb of the great bishop; then, crossing the Loire, went to Marmoutier to rebaptise himself in the monastic spirit, by visiting all the spots where Martin had knelt in prayer, or which he had sanctified by song; he carried back with him, as a medicine for his sick, the water of the well which Martin had opened by his own labour. There he met the Bishop Gregory, whose intimate friend he became, and who has preserved to us all these details.[3]

He continued in the mean time to keep up his

[1] Now a district county-town in the Haute-Vienne.

[2] "In villis amœnis. . . . Incumbens lectioni . . . laborans per agros, alimoniam corpori quærebat. . . . Codices sacros. . . . Multitudo pauperum velut apes ad alvearium confluebant ad eum."—*Vita prolixior*, p. 200.

[3] "Beatum sepulcrum orando deosculans. . . . Anno transito . . . cuncta circuit, cuncta peragrat. . . ."—*De Mir. S. Mart.*, ii. 39. Compare iii. 24.

He interferes with the Merovingians to lighten taxation.

intercourse with the Merovingian princes, and by this means interfered on behalf of the oppressed population. More than once, when the tributes and villain-tax were applied with too much severity to the cities of the Gauls, according to lists which the kings had made out, he hastened to ask a diminution of that intolerable burden. One day, when going through Paris, he had travelled secretly and in haste as far as Braine, where King Chilperic then was, the latter, who was sick of a fever, when informed of his arrival, immediately ordered him to be brought, in hope to obtain a cure by the prayers of the servant of God. But Aredius, while feeling his pulse, could speak of nothing but the object of his journey. The king, touched or terrified by his remonstrances, delivered up to him the lists of the contributions which weighed so cruelly upon the poor people. Then the abbot lighted a great fire and burned the fatal registers with his own hands, in the presence of a numerous crowd. He had before announced that the king would be healed, but that his sons should die in his stead, which happened as he said.[1]

He burns the registers.

[1] "Accidit ut populis tributa vel census a regibus fuissent descripta: quæ conditio universis urbibus per Gallias constitutis summopere est adhibita. Pro hac se vir reverentissimus pietate motus ad regis præsentiam properavit, ut suggestionem daret pro civibus, qui gravi censu publico fuerant edicto adscripti. . . . Alio quoque tempore, pro hujuscemodi conditione properavit itinere. . . . Cœpit cum manibus suis palpare. . . . Libros ipsos, quibus inscriptus pro gravi censu populus regni ejus tenebatur afflictus. . . . Jussit prunas parari. . . . Apprehensos manibus ipsis libros, multis etiam circumstantibus, incendio concremavit."—

On another occasion, having heard that there were several persons condemned to death at Limoges, he went from his monastery to the town, to consult upon the means of saving them. Here popular tradition is carried away by the memory of that compassion for all kinds of misfortunes with which the heart of the holy abbot overflowed. It records, that as soon as he approached the prison, the doors turned on their hinges of themselves, and all the locks were broken, as well as the chains of the captives, who were thus enabled to escape, and seek an inviolable asylum at the tomb of St Martial, the first apostle of Limousin.[1]

His will.

A still more authentic memorial of his solicitude for his inferiors remains to us in his will, written twenty years before his death, and confirmed on the eve of that day when, full of years and labours,[2] he

Vita prolixior, p. 203. The Bollandists (p. 190) and Ruinart think that this king, who is not named in the contemporary narrative, was Chilperic I., king of Neustria, and son of Clotaire; but it is singular that Gregory of Tours, who knew Aredius so well, has not named him in relating how Fredegond and Chilperic decided on burning the taxing lists after the death of their three sons.—*Hist. Franc.*, lib. i. c. 35.

[1] "Confestim . . . velut magno ferientis impulsu confractæ seræ, dissipati cardines ostia carceris patefacta, et omnia vincula compeditorum resoluta sunt."—*Vita prolixior*, p. 201. Gregory of Tours relates another incident which shows to what an extent the monks were then regarded as the natural and powerful protectors of the condemned. A criminal was condemned to death; when he had been hung, the rope broke, and he fell to the ground without being hurt. They hung him anew. On this news, the abbot of the nearest monastery ran to the count, or judge of the district, to intercede for him, and after having obtained the life of the culprit, he brought him to the monastery penitent and saved.—*De Mirac. S. Martini*, iii. 53.

[2] "Post labores innumeros viriliter ac fortiter toleratos."—*Vita prima*, No. 13.

appeared before God. By this document he places his monastery and monks, his villa of Excideuil with all the serfs or *mancipia* who cultivated his vineyards, and whose names and families he enumerates carefully, under the protection of the church of St Martin of Tours, which was then the most venerated sanctuary in Gaul. He stipulates expressly that certain female vassals, whom he names, should pay only a *triens* each, yearly, to the monks of his monastery. Finally, he mentions name by name, fifty men and women, among whom was a certain Lucy, whom he had ransomed from captivity; he intrusted their freedom to the guardianship of St Martin. "These are," he says, "my freed men and women, some of whom have been confided to me by my father of blessed memory, and the others I have myself enfranchised for the good of my brother's soul; I give them to thy charge, my lord St Martin. And if any man assumes to exact from them what they do not owe, or to disturb and oppress them for any reason whatever, it shall be thy part, St Martin, to defend them."[1]

[1] "Volumus ut . . . sub defensione tua, sancte domine Martine, consistant . . . cum Lucia quam redemimus captivam. . . . Ita *liberos* et *liberas* nostras, quos nobis bonæ memoriæ genitor noster Jocundus per testamentum suum commendavit, similiter et illos quos pro remedio animæ bonæ memoriæ fratris nostri Eustadii liberos fecimus tibi, sancte Martine, defensando commendamus. Et si quis eis amplius præter hoc quod eis injunctum et in quolibet inquietare aut dominare voluerit, tu, sancte Martine, defendas."—MABILLON, *Analecta*, p. 209. The authenticity of this testament, mentioned by Gregory of Tours, published and annotated as authentic by Mabillon and Ruinart, has been disputed by Le Cointe. The Bollandists discuss without deciding this

During the last sufferings of this benefactor of the unfortunate and the slaves, a poor sick woman, one possessed with a devil, whom the holy abbot had not been able to heal, escaped from the prison where she had been confined, and ran to the monastery, crying—"Come, friends and neighbours, make haste; come, let us hasten to meet the martyrs and confessors who are coming to celebrate the obsequies of our holy abbot. Behold Julian approaching from Brives, Martin from Tours, Martial from our city of Limoges, Saturnin from Toulouse, Denis from Paris, and many others who are in heaven, and to whom you appeal as martyrs and confessors of God." Aredius some time before had predicted his own death to his friend Gregory of Tours, and taken leave of him while kissing the tomb of St Martin for the last time; he died above eighty years old; and the poor possessed woman was cured by his intercession.[1] His death.

That faith which opened heaven to the eyes of that poor woman, and showed her the apostles whose martyrdom had worked the first conversion of Gaul, standing closer in their ranks to admit the new confessors produced by the monastic order,—that

question. It is very long, and contains a multitude of arrangements which make it one of the most curious documents of the period.

[1] "Dixit nobis se haud longævo tempore adhuc in hoc mundo retineri. . . . Vale dicens . . . gratias agens quod priusquam obiret, sepulcrum B. antistitis osculari promeruisset. . . . Currite, cives, exsilite, populi; exite obviam. . . . Ecce adest Julianus, . . . Martialis ab urbe propria, . . . Dionysius ab urbe Parisiacâ, . . . quos vos ut confessores et Dei martyres adoratis."—GREG. TUR., x. 29.

ardent and tender faith naturally inspired the hearts of the Christian women of Gaul, and rendered the cloisters from which issued so many alms, and at the same time so many examples of virtue, more and more dear to them. Those who did not adopt religious life in their own person had brothers or sisters in it, or, dearer still, sons and daughters; and maternal love thus redoubled their attachment to an institution in which all the blessings and duties of Christianity were to them embodied. The same Gregory of Tours whose invaluable narrative enlightens us in the history, not of the early times of our country alone, but also of the human heart, relates a touching incident in connection with the famous abbey of Agaune (which we have already mentioned[1]), which was built in honour of St Maurice and the martyrs of the Theban legion, on a site near the outlet of the Rhone into the Lake of Geneva, and became the monastic metropolis of the kingdom of Burgundy. A mother had taken her only son to this monastery, where he became a monk, especially instructed and skilful in chanting the liturgical service; he fell sick and died; his mother, in despair, came to bury him, and returned every day to weep and lament over his tomb. One night she saw St Maurice in a dream attempting to console her, but answered him, "No, no; as long as I live I shall always weep my son, my

Maternal love and monastic song.

[1] See vol. i. p. 494, and vol. ii. p. 238, on the occasion of the journey of St Maur.

sole child." "But," answered the saint, "he must not be wept for as if he were dead: he is with us, he rejoices in eternal life, and to-morrow at matins, in the monastery, thou shalt hear his voice among the choir of the monks; and not to-morrow only, but every day as long as thou livest." The mother immediately rose and waited with impatience the first sound of the bell for matins, to hasten to the church of the monks. The precentor having intoned the response, when the monks in full choir took up the anthem, the mother immediately recognised the voice of her dear child. She gave thanks to God; and every day for the rest of her life, thus deluding her grief and maternal tenderness, the moment she approached the choir, she heard the voice of her well-beloved son mingle in the sweet and holy harmony of the liturgical chant.[1] And to us too it seems to echo across the ages, that voice of the child, *vocem infantuli*, the purest, the dearest, the most heaven-like melody that the human ear can receive.

[1] "Cucurrit mater orbata ad obsequium funeris plangens . . . per dies singulos veniebat, et super sepulcrum nati sui . . . ejulabat . . . 'Dum advixero, semper deflebo unicum meum, nec unquam migrabor a lacrymis, donec oculos corporis hujus . . . mors concludat.—Scias eum nobiscum habitare et sedentem vitæ perennis consortio nostro perfrui. . . . Surge crastina die ad matutinum, et audies vocem ejus inter choros psallentium monachorum.' Surgit mulier, longaque ducit suspiria, nec obdormit in strato suo, donec signum ad consurgendum commoveatur a monachis. . . . Ubi cantator responsorium, antiphonam caterva suscepit monachorum, audit genitrix, parvuli vocem cognoscit, et gratias agit Deo. . . . Impletum est ut omnibus diebus vitæ suæ vocem audiret infantuli inter reliqua modulamina vocum."—GREG. TUR., *De Glor. Martyrum*, c. 76.

The Armorican legend also stirs that same chord of maternal love. It tells us how the mother of the Christian bard, the blind Herve, having consented to place him for seven years apart from her in a cloister, where he was taught to excel in song, went to see him, and said, as she was approaching: "I see a procession of monks advancing, and I hear the voice of my son; if there should be a thousand singing together, I could still distinguish the voice of my Herve. I see my son in a grey habit, with a girdle of rope. God be with you, my son, the clerk! when, with the help of God, I get to heaven, you shall be warned of it, you shall hear the angels sing." The same evening after she had so happily seen him, she died; and her son, the precentor and monastic bard, heard the angels who celebrated her obsequies in heaven.[1]

The noble Aredius, whose death has carried us back into legendary ground, did not leave his cloister only to pray at the tomb of St Martin, or to seek favour for an oppressed people from the Merovingian kings. He also went every year to visit in a monastery of Poitiers the most illustrious nun of that age, Queen Radegund.

[1] La Villemarqué, *Légende Celtique*, p. 257.

IV.—ST RADEGUND.

I shall die in my nest.—Job, xxix. 18.

Ella giunse e levò ambo le palme,
Ficcando gli occhi verso l'oriente,
Come dicesse a Dio: d'altro non calme.
Te lucis ante sì divotamente
Le uscì de bocca e con sì dolci note
Che fece me a me uscir di mente.
E l'altre poi dolcemente e divote
Seguitar lei per tutto l'inno intero
Avendo gli occhi alle superne rote.
Purgat., c. viii.

We have now to contemplate at greater length a sweet and noble figure which appears before us: it is that of the holy queen who gave the first example, so often followed since, of a crowned head bowed under the common discipline of monastic laws. Her holy but troubled life, as fit a subject for the poet as for the historian, was contemporary with all the crimes which soiled the annals of the descendants of Clovis. It inaugurates worthily that wonderful action of monastic life upon the women and queens of barbarous nations, which placed a Radegund and a Bathilde upon the throne and the altar, in an age which seemed to be given up as a prey to the Fredegunds and Brunehaults.

Her origin and captivity.

During the expedition of the kings Thierry I. and Clotaire I. beyond the Rhine, and the war of extermination which they waged against the Thuringians in 529, the daughter of a king of Thuringia fell into the hands of the victors. Her name was

Radegund;[1] and, despite her extreme youth, her precocious beauty fascinated the two brothers to such a point that they had almost come to blows to dispute the possession of her. She fell to Clotaire, the most cruel and debauched of all the sons of Clovis. The young and royal captive, snatched from her family by the right of conquest, amid the carnage and devastation of her country, was taken into one of the villas of Clotaire, where he gave her a careful, and even literary education, with the intention of one day making her his wife. She had a great taste for study, but, above everything, for piety; and, far from aspiring to share the bed and throne of her ferocious conqueror, she told her young companions that she desired nothing so much as martyrdom.[2]

When she was eighteen, and knew that the king was preparing everything for their marriage, she

[1] We have her life written first by two contemporaries—the poet Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, and Baudonivia, a nun whom she had brought up; afterwards by Hildebert of Mans, in the twelfth century. A curious work, entitled the *Preuve Historique des Litanies de la Grande Reyne de France Saincte Radegonde*, by M. Jean Filleau, Doctor and Regent of the University, Advocate of the King, &c. (Poitiers, 1543, in folio), may also be consulted. Everybody has read the passages referring to her in M. Augustin Thierry's *Récits Mérovingiens*. M. Edouard de Fleury, in his *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde* (Poitiers, 1843), and, above all, the learned and lamented Abbot Gorini, in his excellent work, entitled *Défense de l'Eglise Catholique contre les Erreurs Historiques*, &c. (Lyon, 1853, t. ii. ch. 15), have very profitably refuted the numerous errors which detract from the value of the narrative of the illustrious blind historian.

[2] "Vultu elegans. . . . Litteris erudita. . . . Frequenter loquens cum parvulis . . . martyr fieri cupiens."—ACT. SS. BOLLAND., t. iii. Aug., pp. 84, 68. "Elegantissima, speciosa nimis et venusta aspectu."—*Vit. S. Juniani*, c. 5, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. BEN., t. i. p. 293.

escaped by night in a boat, from the house, situated on the Somme, where she had been kept. But she was soon retaken, and Clotaire shortly afterwards added his prisoner to the number of his queens—that is, of the wives whom he elevated above the rank of concubines.[1] He is known to have had six of this degree, two of whom were the widows of his brothers, and two sisters whom he had married at the same time. As for Radegund, he loved her passionately, and more than all the others, at least for a time, even while chafing at her coldness, and the strange contrast which he did not fail to perceive between her and himself. "It is not a queen that I have here," he said—"it is a true nun."[2] The young and beautiful captive naturally sought in religion the only grace which could console her

Clotaire marries her.

[1] Compare ACT. SS. BOLLAND., loc. cit., p. 50. We may be permitted to refer to the learned commentary of the Jesuit hagiographies for the difficulties which are raised, not only by the polygamy of Clotaire, but especially by the question, how Radegond could have taken the veil during the lifetime of her husband. We must do Clotaire the justice to acknowledge that, in spite of his unbounded licentiousness, he could respect virginity when it appeared to him consecrated by religion, as is shown in the touching history of Consortia, a rich heiress of Provence, whose immense fortune had drawn around her a crowd of pretenders, and who went to ask of Clotaire the favour of remaining in celibacy in her own domains, the revenue of which was devoted to the Church and to the poor. She obtained it, after having cured one of the daughters of Clotaire of a mortal malady. Subsequently this young princess obtained her brother Sigebert's protection for Consortia, who was again sought in marriage by a Frank noble, that she might keep the liberty which had been promised to her by Clotaire.—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 235.

[2] "Quam tanto amore dilexit, ut nihil præter illam se habere aliquoties fateretur."—*Vita S. Juniani*, loc. cit. "Dicebatur habere se magis jugalem monacham quam reginam."—BOLLAND., p. 69.

for her marriage, and the only strength which could be respected, though scarcely understood, by the master to whom she was obliged to submit. When the king called her to sup with him, she made him wait till she had finished her pious readings, which enraged Clotaire. But the amorous Barbarian soon attempted to make amends by presents for his angry words. During the night she rose from his side to stretch herself upon haircloth until she was half frozen, and could scarcely be restored to warmth by her bed. Her days were devoted to the study of sacred literature, to prolonged interviews with the students and bishops who came to the court of Soissons, and, above all, to almsgiving, and the management of an hospital which she had founded in that estate of Athies, where she had passed the first years of her captivity, and where she herself waited on the sick women with the most devoted care.[1]

Her conjugal life.

Everything in her life reveals the absolute dominion of the faith of Christ upon her soul, and her passionate desire to serve that faith without reservation or delay. At one time, when her servants had praised the new attraction added to her beauty by a sort of head-dress, ornamented with jewels, which was worn by Barbarian queens, she hastened to lay that diadem upon the altar of the

[1] "Rixas habebat a conjuge, ita ut vicibus multis princeps per munera satisfaceret quod per linguam peccasset. . . . Gelu penetrata . . . vix tepefieri poterat vel foco vel lectulo. . . . Morborum curabat putredines, virorum capita diluens."—BOLLAND., p. 69.

nearest church.[1] And at another, indignant to see in her path a pagan temple, a vestige of that which she regarded as a diabolical superstition, she paused in the midst of her military retinue to order its destruction; and, in spite of the furious outcries and desperate resistance of the surrounding population, composed of Franks who were still idolaters and defended the sanctuary of their national worship with swords and clubs, she remained on horseback in the middle of her train till the building had disappeared in the flames.[2]

Six years after her marriage, Clotaire killed, without any reason, a young brother of Radegund, the companion of her captivity, whom she loved tenderly. This was the signal of her deliverance. With the permission of her husband, how obtained it is not known, she left Soissons and went to Noyon to the Bishop Medard, who had great influence over the king and all the nation.

She takes the veil. 544.

She found him at the altar where he was celebrating mass, and besought him to consecrate her to God by giving her the veil. The bishop hesitated and resisted; the Frank lords who were present surrounded him, brought him down from the

1. "Quoties . . . more vestiebat de barbaro, a circumstantibus puellis si laudaretur pulcherrimum."—BOLLAND., p. 69.

2. "Sæculari pompa se comitante. . . . Fanum quod a Francis colebatur . . . diabolico machinamento. . . . Franci et universa multitudo cum gladiis et fustibus. . . . Regina . . . equum quem sedebat inantea non movit."—BOLLAND., p. 76. The nun Baudonivia, in relating this anecdote, says, "Quod audivimus dicimus, et quod vidimus testamur." It is probable that before following the queen into the cloister she was a member of her lay household.

altar with violence, and forbade him to consecrate to God a woman whom the king had made a queen by public marriage. Radegund then took from the sacristy the dress of a nun, in which she clothed herself, and, returning to the altar, said to the bishop, "If thou delayest to consecrate me, if thou fearest man more than God, the Good Shepherd will demand an account from thee of the soul of one of his sheep." Medard was thunderstruck by these words, and immediately laid his hands on her, and consecrated her a deaconess.[1] Clotaire himself did not venture at first to interfere with what had been done. The new nun, using her recognised freedom, went from sanctuary to sanctuary, dropping everywhere, in the form of offerings, her ornaments and queenly robes. Crossing the Loire, she arrived first at Tours, at the tomb of St Martin, to which pilgrims and the unfortunate resorted from all parts of Christendom, and where she perhaps found her illustrious mother-in-law Clotilda, who had come to await death near the holy tomb.[2] She afterwards established herself in the lands of Saix, in Poitou, which her husband had granted her; and there, living a truly recluse life, she began to practise the most rigorous austerities, and especially lavished her cares upon the poor and sick, and rendered them

[1] "Ne velaret regi conjunctam. . . . Reginam non publicanam, sed publicam. . . . Intrans in sacrarium, monachica veste induitur. . . . Quod ille contestationis concussus tonitruo."—BOLLAND., loc. c., p. 70.

[2] Mabillon fixes her death in 544. The Bollandists (die 3 Junii) mention no precise date.

the most repulsive services. After having bathed the lepers with her own hands, she kissed their disgusting sores. "Holy lady," said one of her servants, one day, "who will kiss you, if you thus kiss the lepers?" "Well," said she, smiling, "if thou dost never kiss me again, that is nothing to me."[1]

Clotaire attempts to reclaim her.

However, her fame so spread that Clotaire, whose love was revived by absence, set out to reclaim her.[2] She then took refuge at the tomb of St Hilary, in Poitiers; and he, again overcome by religious fear, gave her permission to build a monastery for women at Poitiers, and to seclude herself in it. When this cloister was completed, she entered it triumphantly amid popular rejoicings, making her way through crowds of spectators, who, after filling all the streets and squares, covered even the roofs of houses from which they could see her pass.[3]

But she was soon assailed by new terrors. She heard that under pretext of devotion Clotaire had arrived at Tours, and that he had arranged to come to Poitiers to seek her whom he called his dear queen. The holy bishop Medard could no longer use his influence to defend her: he was just dead. But the illustrious bishop of Paris, Germain, was still living: she wrote to him, adjuring him to persuade the king

545.

He is prevented by St Germain.

[1] "Sanctissima domina, quis te osculabitur, quæ sic leprosos complectoris? . . . Vere, si me non osculeris, hinc mihi non cura est."—Pag. 71.

[2] "Fit sonus quasi rex eam iterum vellet accipere."—P. 76.

[3] BOLLAND., loc. cit., p. 76.

to respect her vow. The bishop sought the king before the tomb of St Martin, and supplicated him on his knees, weeping, not to go to Poitiers. Clotaire recognised the voice of Radegund through the words of Germain, but recognised at the same time how unworthy he himself was to have for his queen a woman who had always preferred God's will to her own. He knelt in his turn before the bishop, and begged him to go and ask pardon of that saint for all the wrong which evil counsels had made him undertake against her. And from this time he left her in peace.[1]

She founds the monastery of St Croix in Poitiers.

Radegund then employed herself in constituting upon a solid foundation the community in which she was to pass the last forty years of her life. This community was very numerous: the queen's presence attracted to it nearly two hundred young girls of various races and conditions, and amongst these Gauls of senatorial family, and Frank princesses of Merovingian blood.[2] But she would not govern them herself, and caused a young girl named Agnes, whom she had herself trained, to be elected abbess.

Her cloistral life.

Restricting herself severely to the rank and obligations of a simple nun, she took her turn in cooking, in carrying wood and water, and in cleaning away the filth; while, notwithstanding, she pursued her

[1] "Jam per internuntios cognoverat. . . . Quasi devotionis causa . . . ut suam reginam acciperet. . . . Sacramentales litteras fecit. . . . Prosternit se et ille ante limina S. Martini pedibus apostolici viri."—BOLLAND., loc. cit., p. 76.

[2] GREG. TURON., *De Glor. Confessor.*, c. 106.

studies of the Fathers and the Holy Scriptures, and especially continued with the most courageous perseverance her care of the poor.[1] But this sincere and active humility did not prevent her from being considered by all the nuns, as well as by the whole Church, the true superior of the monastery which she had founded. At her petition, the bishops of the second Council of Tours sanctioned the irrevocable vow of virgins consecrated to God, according to the rule of St Cæsarius, for she went as far as Arles to study and bring back the wise and severe rule which that great bishop had instituted there, a century before, for the monastery governed by his sister.[2] She had need of that protection from without, for the bishop of Poitiers, Merovée, showed an inveterate hostility to her all her life.[3]

On the other hand, to adorn still better her dear sanctuary, she sent to the Emperor Justin at Constantinople to ask for a fragment of the true cross, which he granted to her. A new Helena, she received with transports of joy the holy relic which gave its name to her monastery; and the sublime accents of the *Vexilla regis* and of the *Pange lingua* echoed for the first time in the ears of the faithful upon

[1] "Monachabus soporantibus calceamenta tergens et ungens. . . . Scopans monasterii plateas . . . secretum etiam opus purgare non tardans, sed scopans ferebat fœtores stercorum; credebat se minorem sibi, si se non nobilitaret servitii vilitate . . . capita lavans egenorum . . . mulieres variis leprœ perfusas maculis comprehendens in amplexibus."—BOLLAND., pp. 68, 72.

[2] See above, vol. i. p. 473.

[3] GREG. TURON., *Hist.*, lib. ix. c. 39, 40.

the occasion of its arrival—new hymns with which that solemnity inspired the poet Venantius Fortunatus, and which all the Church has sung since then.

Her friendship with the poet Fortunatus.

This Fortunatus[1] was an Italian, who, coming to visit the sanctuaries of Gaul, had established himself at Poitiers. He became, long after, the bishop of that city, and the biographer of Radegund, but then was only famed for his poetical talents. The cloistered queen made him her secretary, and the intendant of the goods of the monastery. In verses where classic recollections and literary graces mingle perhaps too often with the inspirations of the Catholic faith, he enters into many curious and valuable details of the touching intimacy which existed between himself, the abbess Agnes, and Radegund.[2] He often speaks in the name of the latter, especially in one celebrated passage, where he supposes the queen to retain, after having reached the age of fifty, a poignant and impassioned recollection of her ravaged country, her murdered family, and of a cousin who had by that time found a refuge at Constantinople, and who had perhaps shared the first days of her captivity, when she herself, led into bondage, had left her Germanic fatherland for ever.

[1] Born at Ceneda, near Trevise, in 530. He became bishop of Poitiers only in 599, twelve years after the death of Radegund.

[2] We refer again to the peremptory refutation which M. Gorini has given to the erroneous suppositions of MM. Ampère and Augustin Thierry with regard to that friendship.

As it has been said that Radegund herself had dictated these verses, which breathe the sentiment of true poetry, we shall quote some passages, literally translated :—

" When the wind murmurs, I listen if it brings me some news, but of all my kindred not even a shadow presents itself to me. . . . And thou, Amalafried, gentle son of my father's brother, does no anxiety for me consume thy heart? Hast thou forgotten what Radegund was to thee in thy earliest years, and how much thou lovedst me, and how thou heldst the place of the father, mother, brother, and sister whom I had lost? An hour absent from thee seemed to me eternal; now ages pass, and I never hear a word from thee. A whole world now lies betwixt those who loved each other, and who of old were never separate. If others, for pity alone, cross the Alps to seek their lost slaves, wherefore am I forgotten, I who am bound to thee by blood? Where art thou? I ask the wind as it sighs, the clouds as they pass; at least some bird might bring me news of thee. If the holy enclosure of this monastery did not restrain me, thou shouldst see me suddenly appear beside thee. I could cross the stormy seas, in winter, if it was necessary. The tempest that alarms the sailors should cause no fear to me who love thee. If my vessel were dashed to pieces by the tempest, I should cling to a plank to reach thee; and if I could find nothing to cling to, I should go to thee swimming, exhausted! If

I could but see thee once more, I should deny all the perils of the journey; and if I died by the way, thou shouldst make me a grave in the sand, and in burying me shouldst weep for her, dead, whose tears, when living, thou disdainedst."[1]

Her tenderness for her nuns.

But if the holy recluse permitted the Italian poet to invoke, in her name, those passionate images of the past, of her country, and her young affections, no trace of them appeared in her life. On the contrary, she had concentrated all the warmth of her tenderness upon her monastic family. When she saw all her young and numerous brood collected round

[1] "Specto libens aliquam si nuntiet aura salutem,
Nullaque de cunctis umbra parentis adest. . . .
An quod in absenti te nec mea cura remordet,
Affectum dulcem cladis amara tulit?
Vel memor esto, tuis primævis qualis ab annis,
Hamalefrede, tibi tunc Radegundes eram.
Quantum me quondam dulcis dilexeris infans. . . .
Vixerat in spatium, quo te minus hora referret;
Sæcula nunc fugiunt, nec tua verba fero. . . .
Inter amatores totusque interjacet orbis. . . .
Si famulos alii, pietatis lege, requirunt,
Cur ego præterear, sanguine juncta parens? . . .
Quæ loca te teneant, si sibilat aura, requiro;
Nubila si volites, pendula posco locum. . . .
Prospera vel veniens nuntia ferret avis!
Sacra monasterii si me non claustra tenerent,
Improvisa aderam, qua regione sedes. . . .
Et quod nauta timet non pavitasset amans. . . .
Ad te venissem, lassa, natante manu.
Cum te respicerem, peregrina pericla negassem. . . .
Vel tumulum manibus ferret arena tuis. . . .
Qui spernis vitæ fletus, lacrymatus humares."

M. Augustin Thierry has reproduced the complete text of this poem, entitled *De Excidio Thuringiæ ex Persona Radegundis*, at the end of his *Récits Mérovingiens*, taking advantage of the various readings discovered by M. Guérard.

her, she constantly addressed them thus: "I love you so much, that I remember no longer that I have had relations and married a king. I no longer love anything but you, young girls whom I have chosen, young flowers whom I have planted—you, my eyes and my life, my rest and my happiness!"[1] Thus surrounded, she could forget all the outer world. One evening, as Fortunatus himself relates, towards the close of day, some musicians passed the walls of the monastery dancing and singing loudly. The saint was at prayers with two of her sisters; one of them said to her gaily, "Madam, these dancers are singing one of the airs which I used to sing myself in old times." "Truly," said the queen, "I wonder that, belonging to the Lord, you can take pleasure in listening to these worldly sounds." "But, indeed," answered the sister, "it is because I hear two or three of my own songs." "Well, well! as for me," said the queen, "I take God to witness that I have not heard a single note of that profane music."[2]

However, governed by these affections of the cloister and thoughts of heaven as she was, she

[1] "In tantum dilexit, ut etiam parentis vel regem conjugem se habuisse, quod frequenter nobis etiam dum prædicabat, dicebat: . . . Vos, lumina; vos, mea vita; . . . vos, novella plantatio."—BAUDONIVIA, *Monialis Æqualis*, ap. BOLLAND., p. 77.

[2] "Inter choraulas et citharas . . . multo fremitu cantaretur. . . . Domina, recognovi unam de meis canticis a saltantibus prædicari. . . . Vere, Domina, duas et tres hic modo meas canticas audivi quas tenuit." VENANTIUS FORTUNAT., *Ibid.*, p. 74. These two sketches, which M. Thierry has not thought proper to draw from sources which he has so often quoted, might have sufficed to refute most of his assertions.

Her solicitude for peace among the Merovingian princes.

retained, notwithstanding, an anxious solicitude for the interests of the royal house and the country of her marriage. At the height of the struggles between her daughters-in-law, the atrocious Fredegund and Brunehault, she perpetually interposed to preach peace and reconciliation. The salvation of the country, says the faithful companion of her life, was always in her mind; she trembled through all her frame when she heard of some new rupture. Although she, perhaps, inclined towards the side of Brunehault and her children, she included all the Merovingian princes in her love. She wrote to all the kings, one after the other, and then to the principal lords, adjuring them to watch over the true interests of the people and the country. "Peace between the kings is my victory," she said; and to obtain this from the celestial King, she engaged the prayers of all her community, and redoubled, for her own part, her fasts, penances, and charity.[1]

Her austerities.

For this woman, who is represented to us as "seeking a sort of compromise between monastic austerity and the softened and elegant habits of civilised society,"[2] was not only the first to practise what she taught to others, but actually inflicted

[1] "Semper de salute patriæ curiosa . . . quia totos diligebat reges. . . . Tota tremebat, et quales litteras uni, tales dirigebat alteri. . . . Ut, eis regnantibus, populi et *patria* salubrior redderetur."—BAUDONIVA, loc. c., p. 78. Compare p. 80, on Brunehault. This is an excellent answer to that professor who wrote, some years ago, that the word *patrie* was unknown in the Christian world before the *Renaissance*.

[2] AUG. THIERRY, *Récits Mérovingiens*, t. ii. p. 153, 7th edition.

tortures upon herself to reduce her flesh more completely into servitude. It is true that, full of indulgence for her companions, she permitted them frequent intercourse with their friends outside, repasts in common, and even dramatic entertainments, the custom of which was then introduced, and long maintained in the learned communities of the middle ages.[1] But she refused for herself every recreation or softening of the rule. She went so far as to heat a metal cross in the fire and stamp it upon her flesh, which was still too delicate to satisfy her, as the sacred stigmata of her love for the crucified Saviour.[2]

Her friendship for the Benedictine Junian.

Till the time of her death she wore upon her naked flesh an iron chain, which she had received as a gift from a lord of Poitou, named Junian, who had, like herself, quitted the world for a life of solitude, and who kept together by the bond of charity a numerous body of monks under the rule which the beloved disciple of Benedict had just brought into Gaul. A worthy rival of the charity of Radegund, he supported, at great expense, herds of cattle and rich poultry-yards, in order to give the poor peasants oxen for ploughing, clothes, eggs, and cheese, and even fowls for the sick. He wore no

[1] "Barbatorias intus eo quod celebraverit. . . . De tabula vero respondit, et si lusisset vivente Domna Radegunde. . . . De conviviis ait se nullam novam fecisse consuetudinem, nisi sicut actum est sub Domna Radegunde."—GREG. TUR., *Hist.*, x. 245. Compare MAGNIN, *Journal des Savants*, May 1860.

[2] VENANT. FORTUNAT., loc. cit.

other dress than the woollen robes which the queen span for him. They had agreed to pray for each other after their death; they died on the same day, at the same hour, and the messengers, who left at once the St Croix of Poitiers and the cloister inhabited by Junian, met half-way with the same melancholy news.[1]

They died on the same day.

13th August 587.

Funeral and will of Radegund.

Gregory of Tours celebrated the funeral of the holy queen, and tells us that even in her coffin her beauty was still dazzling. Around this coffin the two hundred nuns whom she had drawn from the world to give them to God, chanted a kind of plaintive eclogue, in which they celebrated the virtues of their abbess, and the love with which she inspired them. Then when Gregory conducted the body to the grave, where the seclusion prescribed by the rule of St Cæsarius debarred the nuns from following, he saw them press to the windows, and to the towers and battlements of the monastery, where their lamentations, tears, and the wringing of their hands, rendered a last homage to their royal foundress.[2] Before her death she had made a kind of will,

[1] "Sub B. Benedicti regula. . . . Tantæ charitatis glutino omnem monachorum catervam constrinxerat. . . . Quem S. Radegundis sacrificiis suis fovebat. . . . Nec aliud tegminis habuit, nisi quod ab illa conficiebatur. . . . Sed et illa sanctissima catenam ferri ab illo sanctissimo viro accepit. . . . Declarat mandatum ut statim cum a sæculo migrasset nuntiaretur B. Radegundis."—WULFINUS *Episc.*, *Vit. S. Juniani*, ap. LABBE, *Nov. Bibl. MS.*, t. ii. p. 572. This Junian, Abbot of Mairé in Poitou, must not be confounded with another St Junian, hermit, after whom the town of that name in Limousin was called. Compare BOLLAND., vol. iii. Aug., p. 32, and vol. vii. Octobr., p. 841.

[2] "Reperimus eam jacentem in feretro, cujus sancta facies ita ful-

in which she took no title but that of *Radegund, sinner*, and in which she put her dear monastery under the charge of St Martin and St Hilary, adjuring the bishops and kings to treat as spoilers and persecutors of the poor all who should attempt to disturb the community, to change its rule, or dispossess its abbess.

Tumults in the monastery.

But it was rather from internal disorders than outside enemies that her work required to be preserved. Even in her own lifetime one of the nuns had escaped over the wall of the abbey, and, taking refuge in the church of St Hilary, had poured forth a hundred calumnies against the abbess. She had been made to re-enter the monastery, hoisted up by ropes, at the same part of the rampart by which she descended, and had acknowledged the falsehood of her accusations against Agnes and Radegund.[1]

Revolt of the nuns under two princesses of the Merovingian blood.

After their death matters were still worse. Among the Frank princesses whom she had led or received into the shadow of the sanctuary of St Croix, there were two who retained all the Barbarian vehemence, and who, far from profiting by the example of the widow of Clotaire, showed themselves only too faithful to the blood of their grandsire. These

gebat ut liliorum rosarumque sperneret pulchritudinem."—GREG. TURON. "Transeuntibus nobis sub muro, iterum caterva virginum per fenestras turrium et ipsa quoque muri propugnacula . . . ita ut inter sonos fletuum atque conlisiones palmarum."—*De Gloria Confess.*, c. 106. Compare MAGNIN, loc. cit.

[1] GREG. TURON., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. x. c. 40.

were Chrodield, daughter of King Caribert, and the unfortunate Basine, daughter of King Chilperic and Queen Audovere, whom Fredegund, her infamous mother-in-law, had cast into the cloister, after having had her dishonoured by her valets.[1] At the death of the abbess Agnes, who soon followed her benefactress to the grave, Chrodield, irritated at not having been elected in her place, formed a plot against the new abbess Leubovere, and left the monastery with her cousin and forty other nuns, saying, "I go to the kings my relations to let them know the ignominy which has been inflicted on us, for we have been treated here not like the daughters of kings, but like the daughters of miserable slaves." Without listening to the remonstrances of the bishops, they broke the locks and doors, and went on foot from Poitiers to Tours, where they arrived panting, worn, and exhausted, by roads flooded by the great rains, and without having eaten anything on the road. Chrodield presented herself to Gregory of Tours, who read to the party the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the Council of Tours against nuns guilty of breaking their seclusion, entreated them not to destroy thus the work of the holy queen Radegund, and offered to conduct them back to Poitiers. "No, no," said Chrodield; "we are going to the kings."

Gregory succeeded in persuading them to wait at least for the summer. The fine weather having

[1] Greg. Turon., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. v. c. 40.

come, Chrodield left her cousin and her companions at Tours, and went to her uncle Gontran, King of Burgundy, who received her well, and named certain bishops to investigate the quarrel. Returning to Tours, she found that several of the fugitives had allowed themselves to be seduced and married. With those that remained she returned to Poitiers and they installed themselves in the church of St Hilary with a troop of robbers and bandits to defend them, saying always, "We are queens, and we will only return to the monastery when the abbess is expelled from it." The metropolitan of Bordeaux then appeared with the Bishop of Poitiers and two others of his suffragans, and, upon their obstinate refusal to return to their monastery, excommunicated them. But the bandits whom they had hired for their defence attacked the bishops, threw them down upon the pavement of the church, and broke the heads of several deacons in their suite. A panic seized the episcopal train: every man saved himself as he could. Chrodield afterwards sent her followers to seize the lands of the monastery, made the vassals obey her by dint of blows, and threatened always, if she returned to the monastery, to throw the abbess over the walls. King Childebert, the Count of Poitou, and the bishops of the province of Lyons, interfered in turn without any better success. This lasted for a whole year. The cold of winter constrained the rebels to separate, for they had no other shelter than the

They establish themselves in the abbatial church, and expel the bishops from it.

church, where they could not make a sufficient fire to keep themselves warm.[1]

New violence.

Discords, however, arose between the two cousins, who each assumed to be leader, by her right as a princess of the blood royal. But Chrodield maintained her supremacy; she took advantage of it to adopt still more violent measures, and sent her troop of bandits against the monastery. They made their way into it by night, with arms in their hands, forcing the doors with axes, and seized the abbess, who, helpless with gout, and scarcely able to walk, was roused by the noise to go and prostrate herself before the shrine which enclosed the true cross. They dragged her, half naked, to the church of St Hilary, and shut her up there, in the portion inhabited by Basine. Chrodield gave orders to poniard her upon the spot, if the bishop or any other person endeavoured to set her at liberty. After this she pillaged her ancient monastery from top to bottom; many nuns were wounded, and the servants faithful to the abbess were killed upon the very sepulchre of Radegund. Basine, wounded by the pride of her cousin, took advantage of the neighbourhood

[1] "Vado ad parentes meos reges . . . quia non ut filiæ regum, sed ut malarum ancillarum genitæ in hoc loco humiliamur. . . . Pedestri itinere . . . anhelæ et satis exiguæ. . . . Nequaquam, sed ad reges ibimus. . . . Quia reginæ sumus, nec prius in monasterium nostrum ingrediemur, nisi abbatissa ejiciatur foras. . . . Cum effractis capitibus. . . . Minans ut . . . abbatissam de muro projectam terræ dejiceret. . . . Propter penuriam ligni . . ."—GREG. TURON., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ix. c. 39, 43.

of the captive abbess to attempt a reconciliation with her; but it was without result.

These battles and murders continued at a still greater rate, until finally the kings Gontran of Burgundy, and Childebert of Austrasia, uncle and cousin of the two principal culprits, resolved to put an end to this disgraceful scandal. They convoked the bishops anew; but Gregory of Tours declared that they could on no account assemble till sedition had been suppressed by the secular arm. Then the Count of Poitiers, supported apparently by the entire population of the town, made a formal attack upon the basilica built by Radegund, which had been transformed into a citadel. It was in vain that Chrodield ordered a sortie of her satellites, and that, seeing them repulsed, she advanced to meet the besiegers, the cross in her hand, crying, "Do nothing to me, for I am a queen, daughter of a king, cousin and niece of your kings: do nothing to me, or the time will come when I shall avenge myself." Her person was respected. But her bravoes were seized and executed in various ways. Then the bishops proceeded, in the very church which had been thus delivered, to sit in judgment on the contest. Chrodield, who was not cast down by her defeat, constituted herself the accuser of the abbess; she reproached this poor bedridden gouty woman with having a man in her service dressed like a woman, with playing dice, eating with secular persons, and other still less serious imputations. She complained

Defeat of the rebels.

at the same time that she and her companions had neither food nor clothing, and that they had been beaten. The abbess defended herself without difficulty; the two princesses were obliged to confess that they had no capital crime, such as homicide or adultery, to allege against her; whilst the bishops reminded them that some of the nuns of their own party had fallen into sin, in consequence of the disorder into which their leaders had plunged them. Notwithstanding, they refused to ask pardon of the abbess—threatened loudly, on the contrary, to kill her.[1] The bishops then declared them excommunicated, and re-established the abbess in the monastery of which she had been deprived. Even then the rebel princesses did not submit: they went to their cousin, King Childebert, and denounced the abbess to him as sending daily messages to his enemy Fredegund. He was weak enough to recommend his cousins to the bishops who were about to meet for a new council at Metz. But there Basine finally separated from her cousin; she threw herself at the feet of the bishops, asked their pardon, and promised to return to St Croix of Poitiers, to live there according to the rule. Chrodield, on the contrary, declared that she would never set foot in it while

[1] "Statim cum gladio percute. . . . Nolite super me, quæso, vim inferre, quæ sum regina, filia regis, regisque alterius consobrina. . . . Sed vulgus parvipendens. . . . Contra comitem et plebem. . . . Quas credebamus innocentes monachas nobis protulerunt prægnantes. . . . De ejus interfectione tractarent, quod publice sunt professæ."—GREG. TURON., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. x. c. 16.

the abbess remained there; and the result was, that they permitted her to live near Poitiers on an estate given her by the king.

This confused contrast of so many crimes and so many virtues; these monks, whose charity to their neighbour was only equalled by their severity to themselves, and these bandits commanded by debauched nuns; these daughters of Frank and German kings, some transfigured by faith and poetry, while others were suffering or inflicting the most infamous outrages; these kings by turns ferocious and amiable; this great bishop standing near the tomb of his immortal predecessor, and preaching order and peace to all; these murders and sacrileges face to face with the impassioned worship of the most venerable relics; the boldness and long impunity of crime side by side with so many prodigies of fervour and austerity; in a word, this mingled crowd of saints and villains, offers the most faithful picture of the long combat waged by Christian dignity and Christian virtue against the violence of the Barbarians, and the vices of the Gallo-Romans enervated by long subjection to despotism. Monks and nuns were the heroes and instruments of that struggle. It lasted for two centuries longer before it gave way to the luminous and powerful age of the first Carlovingians, and was renewed at a later period under new forms and against new assailants.

In the same year which saw all Gaul south of

the Loire disturbed by this scandal, the famous monastery of Luxeuil, founded by a Celtic missionary, St. Columba, and destined to become for a time the monastic metropolis of the Frank dominions, came into being at the other extremity of the country, at the foot of the Vosges, between the Rhone and the Rhine. Here we must hereafter seek the centre of monastic life in Gaul, and study the action of the monks upon the kingdom and people of the Franks.

V.—THE MONKS AND NATURE.

> The Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.—Isa. li. 3.

But before we study the action of the great Celtic missionary upon the kingdom and people of the Franks, it is important to observe one of the distinct characteristics of the monastic occupation of Gaul. We should greatly deceive ourselves did we suppose that the monks chose the Gallo-Roman cities or populous towns for their principal establishments. Episcopal cities like Poitiers, Arles, or Paris, were not the places which they preferred, nor in which they abounded most. They were almost always to be found there, thanks to the zeal of the bishops who sought and drew them to their neighbourhood.

But their own proper impulse, their natural instinct, I know not what current of ideas always swaying them, led them far from towns, and even from the fertile and inhabited rural districts, towards the forests and deserts which then covered the greater part of the soil of our country.

They took special delight in such situations, where we behold them in close conflict with nature, with all her obstacles and dangers; and where we find all that exuberant vigour and life which everywhere distinguishes the spring-time of monastic institutions, and which for two centuries renewed a kind of Thebaid in the forests of Gaul.

However, between that sombre and wild nature of Europe, transferred from the oppressing grasp of Rome to that of the Barbarians, and the unwearied activity of the solitaries and religious communities, there was less a laborious struggle than an intimate and instinctive alliance, the warm and poetic reflection of which animates many a page of the monastic annals. Nothing can be more attractive than this moral and material sympathy between monastic life and the life of nature. To him who would devote sufficient leisure and attention to it, there is here a delightful field of study which might fill a whole life. We may be pardoned for lingering a moment on this fascinating subject, confining ourselves, however, to so much only as concerns the monks of Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries.

When the disciples of St Benedict and St Columba came to settle in Gaul, most of its provinces bore an aspect sadly similar. Roman tyranny and taxation in the first place, and then the ravages of the Barbarian invasions, had changed entire countries into desert and solitary places. That *pagus* which, in the time of Cæsar, had furnished thousands of soldiers against the common enemy, now showed only some few inhabitants scattered over a country allowed to run waste, where a spontaneous and savage vegetation disputed all attempts at culture, and gradually transformed the land into forests. These new forests extended by degrees to the immense clumps of dark and impenetrable wood, which had always covered an important part of the soil of Gaul.[1] One example, among a thousand, will prove the advance of desolation. Upon the right bank of the Loire, five leagues below Orleans, in that district which is now the garden of France, the Gallo-Roman *castrum* of Magdunum, which occupied the site of the existing town of Meung, had completely disappeared under the woods, when the monk Liephard directed his steps there, accompanied by a single disciple, in the sixth century; in place of the numerous inhabitants of former times, there stood only trees, the interlaced branches and trunks of

Spread of desolation.

St Liephard at Meung-sur-Loire.

565.

[1] This question has been exquisitely treated by M. Alfred Maury, in his great work entitled *Les Forêts de la France dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age*, inserted in vol. iv. of the memoirs presented to the Academy for Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres. I owe to him several of the details and quotations which follow.

which formed a sort of impenetrable barrier.[1] And thus also Columba found nothing but idols abandoned in the midst of the wood, upon that site of Luxeuil which had formerly been occupied by the temples and the baths of the Romans.[2]

Gaul covered with forests from the fifth to the seventh century.

These famous Druidical forests in which the sacrifices of the ancient Gauls were celebrated, and which were consecrated by the worship of old trees, so universally practised by all pagan antiquity from the banks of the Ganges to those of the Tiber; these eternal shades, which inspired the Romans with superstitious terror, had not only preserved, but even extended, their formidable empire. The fidelity of the picture drawn by the singer of Pharsalia was more than ever apparent after six centuries had passed :—

> "Lucus erat longo nunquam violatus ab ævo,
> Obscurum cingens connexis aera ramis,
> Et gelidas alte submotis solibus umbras.
> Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes
> Silvani, Nymphæque tenent, sed barbara ritu
> Sacra Deum, structæ diris altaribus aræ . . .
> Arboribus suus horror inest."[3]

[1] "Est autem mons in Aurelianensi pago . . . in quo ab antiquis castrum fuerat ædificatum, quod *crudeli Wandalorum vastatione* ad solum usque dirutum est. Nemine autem remanente habitatore, *nemoribus hinc inde succrescentibus*, locus idem qui claris hominum conventibus quondam replebatur, in densissimam redactus est solitudinem. Cujus abstrusa latibula venerabilis Liephardus petiit."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 145. Compare the following passage in the life of St Laumer: "Secessit in locum quem olim priscorum habitatorum manus extruxerat, sed jam vastitas succrescentium frondium et totum obduxerat."—*Ibid.*, p. 325.

[2] "Ibi imaginum lapidearum densitas vicina saltus densabat."—JONAS, *Vit. St Columbani.*

[3] LUCAN., *Pharsal.*, lib. iii. 399.

Where there had not been sufficient time to produce these immense forest-trees whose tops seem to reach the clouds,[1] or these woodland giants which testified to the antiquity of primitive forests, cultivation and population had not the less disappeared before a lower growth of wood. Certainly magnificent pines, such as those that crown the heights of the Vosges and the sides of the Alps, or oaks, the fallen trunks of which could scarcely be moved by forty men, like that which the Abbot Launomar cut down in the vast forest of Perche, were not to be seen everywhere;[2] but the fertile soil was everywhere usurped by copsewood, where the maple, the birch, the aspen, and the witch-elm, prepared the ground for a more imposing growth of trees, and, still worse, by thickets of thorn and brambles of formidable extent and depth, which arrested the steps and tortured the limbs of the unfortunates who ventured there.[3] These intermediate regions between the great forests and the fields, between the mountains and the cultivated plains, were with too

[1] "Erat silva *longum nunquam violata per ævum*, cujus arborum summitas pene nubes pulsabat."—*Vit. S. Sequani*, c. 7. The words underlined show that the monastic writer of the seventh century knew his Lucan by heart.

[2] "Vasta tractus Perticæ solitudines. . . . Annosam quercum. . . . Immensæ molis. . . . Tanti ponderis ut vix a quadraginta viris portaretur."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. pp. 318, 324.

[3] *Spinæ et vepres:* In almost every life of the holy founders of monasteries we find mention of these vegetable enemies. Thence also the names of several abbeys, *Roncereium*, the Ronceray, at Angers; *Spinetum*, afterwards Boheries; *Spinosus locus*, Espinlieu; *Spinalium*, Epinal, and other local names which are to be found in almost all our provinces: *L'Epine, L'Espinay, La Roncière, Le Roncier, La Ronceraye.*

much justice entitled *deserts*, because the population had abandoned them till the monks brought back fertility and life. In the northern part of the country, occupied by the Burgundians, on the north of the Rhone alone, six great deserts existed at the end of the sixth century,—the desert of Reome, between Tonnerre and Montbard; the desert of Morvan; the desert of Jura; the desert of the Vosges, where Luxeuil and Lure were about to have birth; the desert of Switzerland, between Bienne and Lucerne; and the desert of Gruyere, between the Savine and the Aar.[1] Indeed, the whole extent of Switzerland and Savoy was little else than a vast forest, the name of which alone remains, applied in French to the canton of Vaud (*Pagus Waldensis*) and in German to the four primitive cantons of Lucerne, Schwitz, Uri, and Unterwald (*Die Waldstätten*), where a border of impenetrable wood surrounded the beautiful lake which unites them.[2] Advancing towards the north, the wooded regions became more and more profound and extensive. Even in the provinces least depopulated and best cultivated, through the most favourable soils and climates, long wooded lines extended from north to south, and from the rising to the setting sun, connecting

The desert of Gaul.

[1] See the excellent map of the first kingdom of Burgundy, by Baron Roget de Belloguet, ap. *Mémoires de l'Acad. de Dijon*, 1847-48, p. 313.

[2] *Wald* in German means at the same time *forest and mountain;* it is the *saltus* of the Latins. See MAURY, op. cit.

the great masses of forest with each other, surrounding and enveloping Gaul as in a vast network of shade and silence.

We must then imagine Gaul and all the neighbouring countries, the whole extent of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and both banks of the Rhine —that is to say, the richest and most populous countries of modern Europe—covered with forests such as are scarcely to be seen in America, and of which there does not remain the slightest trace in the ancient world. We must figure to ourselves these masses of sombre and impenetrable wood, covering hills and valleys, the high table-land as well as the marshy bottoms; descending to the banks of the great rivers, and even to the sea; broken here and there by watercourses which laboriously forced a way for themselves across the roots and fallen trees; perpetually divided by bogs and marshes, which swallowed up the animals or men who were so ill-advised as to risk themselves there; and inhabited by innumerable wild beasts, whose ferocity had scarcely been accustomed to fly before man, and of which many different species have since almost completely disappeared from our country.

The monks in the forests.

To plunge into these terrible forests, to encounter these monstrous animals, the tradition of which remains everywhere, and whose bones are still sometimes exhumed, required a courage of which nothing in the existing world can give us an idea.

In all that now remains to be conquered of American forests and deserts, the modern adventurer penetrates armed with all the inventions of industry and mechanical art, provided with all the resources of modern life, sustained by the certainty of success, by the consciousness of progress, and urged forward by the immense pressure of civilisation which follows and sustains him. But at that time no such help came to the monk, who attacked these gloomy woods without arms, without sufficient implements, and often without a single companion. He came out of a desolated, decrepid, and powerless old world, to plunge into the unknown. But he bore with him a strength which nothing has ever surpassed or equalled, the strength conferred by faith in a living God, the protector and rewarder of innocence, by contempt of all material joy, and by an exclusive devotion to the spiritual and future life. He thus advanced, undaunted and serene; and, often without thinking what he did, opened a road to all the benefits of agriculture, labour, and Christian civilisation.

See, then, these men of prayer and penitence, who were at the same time the bold pioneers of Christian civilisation and the modern world; behold them taming that world of wild and savage nature in a thousand different places. They plunged into the darkness carrying light with them, a light which was never more to be extin-

guished; and this light, advancing step by step, lighted everywhere those home-fires which were so many beacons upon the way to heaven,—"from glory to glory,"[1]—and which were to be centres of life and blessing for the people whom they instructed and edified: "In thy light shall we see light."[2]

They entered there, sometimes axe in hand, at the head of a troop of believers scarcely converted, or of pagans surprised and indignant, to cut down the sacred trees, and thus root out the popular superstition. But still more frequently they reached these solitudes with one or two disciples at the most, seeking some distant and solitary retreat, out of the way of men, where they might be allowed to devote themselves entirely to God.

No obstacle nor danger arrested them. The more awful the profound darkness of the forest, the more were they attracted to it.[3] When the only paths were so tortuous, narrow, and bristling with thorns, that it was impossible to move without tearing their clothes, and they could scarcely plant one foot after another in the same line, they ventured on without hesitation. If they had to creep under the interlaced branches to discover some narrow and gloomy cavern obstructed by stones and briers, they were ready to do it. It was when

[1] 2 Corinth. iii. 18. [2] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

[3] "Inter opaca quæque nemorum et lustra abditissima ferarum."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 9.

approaching, on his knees, such a retreat, which the beasts of the forest themselves feared to enter, that the Burgundian priest Sequanus addressed this prayer to God: "Lord, who hast made heaven and earth, who hearest the prayers of him who comes to thee, from whom everything good proceeds, and without whom all the efforts of human weakness are vain, if thou ordainest me to establish myself in this solitude, make it known to me, and lead to a good issue the beginning which thou hast already granted to my devotion." Then, feeling himself inspired and consoled by his prayer, he commenced at that very spot the cell in which originated the abbey and existing town of St Seine.[1] St Seine in Burgundy. 580.

Where a natural cavern was wanting, they constructed some shelter, a hut of branches or reeds;[2] and if there were several, an oratory with a little cloister. Sometimes they hollowed out a cell in the rock, where the bed, the seat, and the table were all cut out of the living stone. Sometimes (like St Calais in a desert of Maine) meeting in the depth of the wood the remains of some ancient

[1] "Callis quidam artuosus . . . tantum angustus, atque sentuosus, ut . . . vix pedem pes sequeretur, impediente densitate ramorum . . . vestimentorum discerptione. . . . Tunc se curvantes solo tenus. . . . Ita implicitæ inter se ramorum frondes . . . ut ipsius etiam feræ formidarent accessum. . . . Ad squalidam silvam. . . . Extemplo parvæ cellulæ in quo loco genua ad orationem fixerat fundamenta molitus est." —*Vit. S. Sequani*, c. 7, 8, ap. ACT. S. O. SS. B., t. i.

[2] "Tugurio frondibus contexto."—*Vita S. Launom.*, c. 7. "Cellulam sibi virgis contexens."—*Vita S. Lifardi*, c. 3. "De virgultis et frondibus construxere tugurium. Quod claustro parvulo ejusdem materiæ circumcingentes."—*Vita S. Ebrulfi*, c. 8.

forsaken buildings, they transformed them into cells and chapels, by means of branches woven between the fragments of ruined wall.[1]

When the course of the liturgy led them to that magnificent enumeration of the victories of patriarchal faith, made by St Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, in which he represents Abraham waiting with confidence in the tents of exile for the eternal city, whose maker and builder was God,[2] they might have applied to themselves that sacred text, "Dwelling in tabernacles." They might well say that their dwelling-places were the *tabernacles*, that is to say, the tents, the cells of exile. At night, lying upon their stone pallets, and during the day protected against every interruption by the thick foliage and inaccessible passes, they gave themselves up to the delights of prayer and contemplation, to visions of a future life in heaven.

Sometimes, also, the future destiny of those great works, of which unawares they sowed the seed, was instinctively revealed to their thoughts. St Imier heard the bells of the monastery which was one day to replace his hermitage echoing through the night. "Dear brother," he said to his only companion, "dost thou hear that distant bell that has

St Imier and Rauracie.

610.

[1] "In altitudine eremi. . . . Reperit . . . parietes vetusti ædificii senio labentes, dignitatem tamen pristinam ipsius operis vestigiis protestantes. . . . Cellulam intra parietinas supradicti ædificii vimine lento contexit."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. ii.

[2] "Dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."—Hebr. xi. 9, 10.

already waked me three times?" "No," said the servant. But Imier rose, and allowed himself to be guided by this mysterious sound across the high plateau and narrow gorges of the valley of Doubs, as far as the gushing fountain, where he established himself, and which has retained his name to the present time.[1] Elsewhere in that Limousin, which was so celebrated for the number and austerity of its solitaries, Junian, the son of a companion of Clovis, abandoned everything at the age of fifteen, to take shelter in an unknown cell on the banks of the Vienne; he left it only to pray in the depths of the wood in the shade of a great hawthorn-tree. Under this blossomed tree they buried him after forty years of that holy and wild life, and the hawthorn disappeared only to make room for a monastery, which was the origin of the existing town of St Junian.[2]

St Junian in Limousin.

The principal aim of all these monks was not to form communities in the forests. They sought only solitude there; they would rather have lived as anchorites than as cenobites. Some, and a great

[1] "Per novem annos breve illud quod quievit super rupes jacuit. . . . Culmen montis ascendit. . . . Per sonitum campanæ. . . . Audisne, mi frater, signum quod ego audio? Nequaquam."—*Breviar. MS. de la Bibl. de Berne*, ap. TROUILLAT, *Monuments de l'Evêché de Bâle*, i. 37. The town of St Imier is at the present time one of the most flourishing centres of watchmaking in the Bernois Jura.

[2] "In quodam ipsius silvæ cacumine . . . subter quamdam arborem quæ spina dicitur, et in vulgari nostro *aubespi* nuncupatur."—MALEU, *Chron. Comodoliacense*, p. 14, ed. Arbellot, 1848. Compare GREG. TUR., *De Glor. Confess.*, c. 103. We have already distinguished this St Junian from another saint of the same name, abbot of Mairé in Poitou, and friend of Radegund. See p. 305.

number, after having founded or lived in monasteries, according to the rule of the life in common, aspired to a more perfect existence, and to end their career as St Benedict had begun his, in some cavern unknown to men. St Benedict himself had inscribed at the head of his Rule that, to be a good anchorite, it was necessary first to have learned how to strive against the devil under the common rule and with the help of the brethren: this was, according to him, an apprenticeship necessary before engaging in what he calls single combat against the temptations of the flesh and the thoughts.[1] Others still more numerous yielded to the overpowering attraction which led them to the depths of the forests, not only to escape from the discussions, violences, and cruel wars, of which every Christian of that period was the witness and too often the victim, but to flee from contact with other men, and to enjoy silence, peace, and freedom.

This, however, was a vain hope. Their solitude soon inspired too much envy, and their austerity too much admiration, to be long respected. Happy were they who heard only the cries of the wild beasts echoing round their cells :—

[1] "Qui non conversionis fervore novitio, sed monasterii probatione diuturna, didicerunt contra diabolum, multorum solatio jam docti, pugnare; et bene instructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi, securi jam sine consolatione alterius, sola manu vel brachio contra vitia carnis vel cogitationum, Deo auxiliante, sufficiunt pugnare."—*Reg.*, c. i.

"Nunc exoriri gemitus iræque leonum
Vincla recusantum, et sera sub nocte rudentum
Sævire, ac formæ magnorum ululare luporum."

Often, in fact, when they celebrated the nocturnal service in their chapels, thatched with green leaves or rushes, the howls of the wolves accompanied their voices, and served as a response to the psalmody of their matins.[1] But they feared much more the step and voice of men. Sometimes in the middle of the night, the voluntary exile, who has hid himself here in the hope of remaining for ever forgotten or unknown, hears some one knock at the door of his hut. It is at first only a reverential and timid tap; he is silent, thinking it a temptation of the devil. It continues: he opens and asks, "What would you with me? Why do you pursue me into my solitary dwelling? Who are you?" He is answered, "A poor sinner, or a young Christian, or an old priest weary of the world."[2] "But what would you with me?" "Be saved like you, and with you: learn from you the way of peace and of the kingdom of God." This unexpected and undesired guest must be admitted. The next morning, or the next again, comes

[1] "In primis ibidem construxit oratorium de virgultis. . . . Frequenter contigit, sicut ipse nobis referre solebat, quod nocturnis temporibus, dum in capella virgea matutinos cantabat, lupus e contra de foris stabat, et quasi psallenti murmurando respondebat."—ORDER VITAL., lib. iii. p. 132, ed. Leprevost.

[2] "Fores ipsius cellulæ lento et suavi ictu reverenter pulsare cœpit. . . . Putans pulsationem hujusmodi ex illusione dæmoniaca processisse."—*Chron. Commod.* lib. c.

another; and they are followed by others still. The anchorites saw themselves thus changed into cenobites, and monastic life established itself involuntarily and unexpectedly amid the most distant forests.

The anchorites of the woods transformed into cenobites against their will.

Besides, it was vain to flee from solitude to solitude; they were pursued, seized upon, surrounded, and importuned incessantly, not only by disciples ambitious of living, like them, in silence and prayer, but by the surrounding populations themselves. Reassured and trustful, growing familiar in their turn with the gloomy arches, where these men of peace and blessing, of labour and charity, had gone before them, they followed in their track; and when they had discovered the hermits, kept up a continued assault, some bringing offerings, others asking alms, prayers, or advice, all seeking the cure of all the troubles both of soul and body. The rich came like the poor, whenever they were afflicted by the hand of God or man. The widows and orphans, the lame and blind, the paralytic and epileptic, the lepers, and, above all, the possessed, appeared in a crowd, in quest of a virtue and knowledge equally supernatural to their eyes.

Concourse that they attracted in the woods.

The solitaries withdrew with modesty from the exercise of the supernatural power attributed to them. When the Abbot Launomar, who being at first a shepherd, had become a student, then the cellarer of a monastery of Chartres, and lastly, an anchorite in the great desert of Perche, which then attracted

St Launer in Perche.

About 590.

many lovers of solitude,[1] was discovered, and approached by a crowd of petitioners, among whom was a distressed father who brought his crippled son to be cured—"You ask too much," said he, "of a sinful man." The same sentiment animated the noble Maglorius, one of the Breton missionaries, and the successor of Samson, at Dol. After having abdicated his bishopric to live as a hermit in the isle of Jersey, which Childebert, as has been already seen, bestowed upon a Breton monastery, the lord of a neighbouring isle, rich in a hundred ploughs, as says the legend, and possessing innumerable fishing-boats, came to ask this saint to restore her speech to his only daughter, who, despite her rich inheritance and rare beauty, could not find a husband because she was dumb. "My son," answered Maglorius, "torment me not: that which you ask is beyond the power of our weakness. When I am sick, I know not whether I am to die or be cured. How, then, having no power over my own life, should I be able to take away any of the other calamities permitted by God? Return to your house, and offer abundant alms to God, that you may obtain from him the cure of your daughter." He ended, however, by yielding to the entreaties of the father, who gave him a third part of all

St Magloire in Armorica and in Jersey.

[1] "Inter opaca nemorum. . . . Vasta tectus Perticæ solitudine."—*Vit. S. Launomari*, c. 5 et 6. "Vastas expetunt Pertesi saltus solitudines."—*Vit. S. Karilefi*, c. 9. Compare *Vit. S. Leobini*, c. 6. "Grandem ab homine peccatore poscis rem: tamen nostras sumens eulogias reduc ad propria filium tuum . . . quibus acceptis sanum reduxit filium."

his possessions, and by obtaining this miracle from God.[1]

The same Maglorius, in leaving his bishopric for solitude, found himself pursued by a crowd so numerous and eager for instruction and consolation, and at the same time so lavish of gifts and alms, that he was in despair. He told his grief, with his face bathed in tears, to his successor in the see of Dol. "No," said he, "I can no longer remain within reach of all these people: I will fly and seek some inaccessible place, where men have never penetrated, nor can penetrate, where no human steps can follow me." The bishop listened in silence, and permitted him to pour out all his grief for some hours; then he mildly reproved him, and showed him that he could not deny to the poor of Christ the true seed of spiritual life, nor refuse to take upon himself the sweet burden of the people's sorrows, for which God would render him a hundredfold. Maglorius listened and obeyed him: and shortly, in place of the solitary cell he had dreamt of, found himself at the head of a community of sixty-two monks.[2]

[1] "Hausit speciem carnis ab arce alti sanguinis. . . . Ad prædicandum populo ejusdem linguæ. . . . Qui licet terram, ut aiunt, centum pene verteret aratris. . . . Divitem censum non sine magno dolore alieno servabat hæredi. Huic unica filia jam nubilis et nimia pulchritudine. . . . Sed quia officio linguæ . . . destituta . . . a nullo sub nomine dotis expetebatur. . . . Fili, noli mihi molestus esse, nam hoc quod requiris non est nostræ fragilitatis.—*Vita S. Maglorii*, c. 1, 3, 29.

[2] "Irrigata facie lacrymis, qualia et quanta a multitudine vulgi perpessus est retulit. . . . Pro certo noveris me hinc impromptu egressurum, et ad locum ubi nulla existunt hominis vestigia. . . . Hinc recedere et

Among the leudes and other possessors of the soil, there were also many to whom gratitude for health restored, or admiration of the virtues displayed by the monks, suggested the thought of associating themselves with their merits and courage by territorial grants, and especially by the concession of these forests of which they were nominally the lords and proprietors, and which they willingly gave up in favour of the servants of God, who had colonised them. Such, among a thousand others, was Ragnosvinthe, a man of illustrious family, and master of vast territorial possessions in the neighbourhood of Chartres; being apprised that the Abbot Launomar had come to establish himself in a corner of his lands, once inhabited, but since swallowed up in the forest, the leude, inspired by the love of Him whose image he venerated in the man of God who had become his guest, transferred to him the perpetual possession of a wooded district, the limits of which were carefully marked out.[1] 563.

Gifts of the leudes.

The monks did not refuse these gifts when they came from a legitimate and natural source. But we must not believe that they were ready to re-

abrupta expetere. . . . Spiritualis alimoniæ pauperibus Christii qua illis vivere est triticum. . . . Horum populorum molestias circa te exagitatas perspicere debes onus leve."—*Vita S. Maglorii*, c. 10 et 11.

[1] "Vir illustris, satis locuples et latissimorum fundorum possessor. . . . Tactus amoris ejus igne, quem in Dei homine artius venerans attendebat, tradidit ei locum in quem vir sanctus ingressus fuerat . . . et de jure suo in ejus dominationem perpetuo transfudit ipsi et posteris ejus . . . quem etiam propriis finibus optime undique determinavit."—*Vita S. Launom.*, ap. Acr. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 324.

Some accepted, others refused.

ceive all that came to them from every hand; for the same Launomar, to whom another noble, feeling himself sick to death, had sent forty sols of gold as the price of the prayers he asked, sent them back at once, suspecting that this sum was the produce of the rapine which the dying man had practised. In vain the bearer of this gift followed him even into his oratory, under pretence of praying with him, and placed the pieces of gold on the altar, taking care to show them, and weigh one by one to make their value apparent. "No," said the abbot, "take back your money, and return to your master; say to him from me, that this money is ill-gotten, that it cannot either prolong his life or change the sentence of God against his sins. God will not have sacrifices produced by rapine. Let your master make haste to restore what he has taken from others, for he shall die of this disease. As for us, by the goodness of Christ, we are rich enough, and, as long as our faith stands fast, we shall want nothing."[1]

Discontent sometimes excited by these gifts.

However, in spite of this reserve, men were not wanting whom these generous gifts inspired with jealous discontent. Even in Armorica, where de-

[1] "Vir nobilis Ermoaldus nomine. . . . Sed devotus miles Domini accipere recusabat. . . . Perge cito, fili. . . . Pecunia hæc mortem divinamque nequit prohibere sententiam, eo quod illius acquisitio injuste facta sit; pro se laboret, quia morietur. . . . Pecunia ista, o homo! iniqua est. . . . Qui Deo sacrificium de rapina parat. . . . Nuntia domino tuo, ut injuste sublata restituet. . . . Nos Christo propitio bonis omnibus abundamus, et, si fide non infirmamur, nihil nobis deerit."—*Vita S. Launom.*, pp. 320, 325.

votion towards the monks seemed native to the very soil, with the faith of which these monks were the first apostles, chiefs of the highest rank yielded to this sentiment, and expressed it loudly. The Briton Malo, who had devoted the numerous gifts which he received to endow a monastery of seventy monks attached to his episcopal church, was forced to leave his diocese and emigrate a second time, before the outcries of those who denounced him as an invader, who intended to bewitch the whole province, and leave no inheritance to the inhabitants or their descendants.

The monks and the brigands.

Recruits, or importunate followers of another kind, often came to trouble their solitude. The condition of Gaul was but too well adapted to encourage the formation and prolonged existence of the habits of brigandage, which have kept their ground in many modern countries through all the progress of civilisation, and which are still to be found in our own day in Spain and Italy. Some contented themselves with stealing the tools of the solitary who had no other wealth, or depriving him of the single cow which he had taken with him; but, more frequently, they aimed even at the life of the intruders. The forests were the natural resort of these bands of brigands, who lived by theft, and who did not recoil from murder when they could thus rob their victims more completely. They could not without rage see the monks disputing the possession of their hitherto

uncontested domain, penetrating farther than they themselves could do, and in such a way as always to defeat their greediness, by entangling those who followed them in bewildering complications of the way.[1] And they were always tempted to believe that these strange guests went either to bury or to seek hidden treasure. The Abbot Launomar, whose legend unites so many incidents of the forest-life of the monastic founders, found himself one morning surrounded by a troop of bandits, who had spent all the night in seeking for him. But when they saw him appear upon the threshold of his hut of branches, they were afraid, and fell at his feet, praying his pardon. "My children," he said, "what do you ask of me? What came you to seek here?" And when they had confessed their murderous intention, he said to them, "God have pity on you! Go in peace. Give up your brigandage, that you may merit the mercy of God. As for me, I have no treasure here below. Christ is my only treasure."[2]

St Launomar in the forest of Perche.

The monks almost always thus disarmed the brigands by their goodness, gentleness, and venerable aspect; they led them to repentance, and often

[1] "Bovem a præsepio solventes abduxerunt. . . . Latrunculi . . . nusquam aditum invenientes quo se de solitudine invia foras extrahere possent."—*Vita S. Launom.*, c. 20.

[2] "Per totam noctem . . . errantes ut eum interficerent. . . . Putabant illum aliquam pecuniam in deserto servare. Diluculo autem facto, vident se repente in conspectu ejus . . . sub parvo tugurio. . . . Parce nobis, vir Dei, parce. . . . Filioli, ut quid parci vobis petitis? Cessite a latrociniis. . . . Pecunia vero nostra Christus est."—Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. pp. 318, 322.

even to monastic life, taking them for companions and disciples.

St Seine in Burgundy. About 580.

Sequanus, whose tranquil courage and fervent piety we have already narrated, had been warned that the borders of the impenetrable forest into which he was about to venture were occupied by bands of assassins, who were even called anthropophagi. "No matter," he said to one of his relatives, who imagined himself the owner of this region, and who gave him this information; "show me only the road by which to reach it; for if my desires are dictated by a divine instinct, all the ferocity of these men will change into the mildness of the dove." And, in fact, when they understood that he had established himself near their caverns, and when they had seen him, the wolves became lambs; they even became labourers to serve and aid him and his, to cut down the neighbouring trees, to dig the foundations and build the walls of his monastery.[1]

St Evroul in Neustria. 517-596.

Whilst this occurred near the sources of the Seine, similar events were taking place not far from its mouth. Ebrulph, a noble Neustrian lord, had given up conjugal life and the favour of kings to betake himself to the wild solitudes of the forest

[1] "Est mihi locus hereditario, ni fallor, jure perdebitus, sed loci illius finitimi, bestiarum more, carnibus humanis ac cruoribus depascuntur. . . . Mihi locum monstra. . . . Erat quippe spelunca latronum. . . . Ex lupis quasi oves facti sunt. . . . Instabant structores operis ii qui advenerant finitimi, pars fundaminis consolidare juncturas . . . pars umbrosæ silvæ nemora detruncare."— *Vit. S. Sequani*, c. 7, 8.

of Ouche, in the *Pagus Oximensis*,[1] which was the hiding-place of numerous brigands. One of these met him: "Oh, monk!" he said, "what can bring you into this place? Do you not see that it is made for bandits and not for hermits? To dwell here you must live by robbery and the wealth of others. We will not tolerate those who would live by their own labour; and besides, the soil is barren; you may take pains to cultivate it, but it will give you back nothing." "I come," answered the saint, "to weep for my sins; under the protection of God I fear the menaces of no man, nor yet the hardships of any labour. The Lord knoweth how to spread a table for his servants in the wilderness; and thou thyself, if thou wilt, mayst seat thyself at it with me." The brigand said nothing, but returned next day to join Ebrulph with three loaves baked under the ashes, and a honeycomb: he and his companions became the first monks of the new monastery, afterwards celebrated under the name of its holy founder.[2] The place from which all men fled soon became the refuge of the poor; alms took the place of robbery, and to such an extent, that one day when a beggar had been sent away because the new-born community had only half a loaf remaining, Ebrulph sent after him to give him that

[1] This name was afterwards translated by the word *Hiesmois*, and was used to designate an archdeaconry of the diocese of Seez.—J. DESNOYERS, *Topogr. Ecclés. de la France au Moyen Age*, p. 166.

[2] Ouche, or St Evroul, in the diocese of Lisieux; in Latin *Uticum*, *Uticense*.

half, trusting for himself and his brethren to the alms of heaven. They wanted so little from him that he was able to found and govern fifteen other monasteries.[1]

The monks and the hunters.

These were not, however, the only encounters or the sole intercourse which their voluntary exile in the woods procured to the monks of the Merovingian age. At the other extremity of the social scale they excited the same feelings of surprise and sympathy. They were perpetually found out and disturbed by kings and nobles, who passed in the chase all the time which was not occupied in war. All the Franks of high rank and their trusty followers gave themselves up to that exercise with a passion which nothing else in their life surpassed. In the vast forests which covered Gaul they found, not only an inexhaustible supply of game, but, above all, animals of size and force so formidable as to offer them all the perils and emotions of war. The elan, the buffalo, the bison, and especially the *urus* (*Auërochs*), so famous for its ferocity, were adversaries worthy of the boldest combatant or the most

[1] "Admodum nobili ortus prosapia. . . . Nobilitatis lampade clarus, mox innotuit Clilotario regi . . . cæteris prælatus maximum in palatio obtineret locum. . . . Quæ silva densitate arborum horribilis, crebris latronum discursibus. . . . O monachi! quæ turbationis causa nostras partes coegit adire? . . . An nescitis quia hic est locus latronum et non heremitarum? . . . arva infructuosa, vestraque labori ingrata invenistis. . . . Non habeo, inquit (minister), nisi dimidium panis quem reservo servulis nostris. Nam cætera secundum jussum tuum erogavi. . . . Cito curre et largire. . . . Accipe, Domine, eleemosynam quam tibi abbas misit. . . . Ecce ante solis occasum quidam clitellarius pro foribus cellulæ visus est, pane et vino sufficienter onustus."—ORDERIC VITAL., lib. vi. pp. 609, 612.

warlike prince. But there, in the midst of the forest, Religion awaited them; and while they thought only of sport, and of pursuing the deer, she raised before them imposing and unexpected sights which filled them with emotion and respect. Sometimes the spectacle of these solitaries, vowed to the service of God, was enough to convert to monastic life the cavalier who came upon them suddenly when he reckoned upon striking his prey with spear or javelin. Such was the case with Bracchio, a young Thuringian huntsman, attached to the person of the Frank Duke of Auvergne, and perhaps brought, like Radegund, from his native land, after the conquest of Thuringia by that same son of Clovis who had listened to and honoured the slave Portianus.[1] This Bracchio, still savage like his name, which signifies a *bear's cub*, passed his life hunting in the vast oak woods which still covered the north of Auvergne. In hot pursuit of an enormous boar, he was led one day to the threshold of the hermitage in which a noble Auvergnat, named Emilian, whom even the wild animals had learned to respect, lived as an anchorite. The dogs stopped short and dared not attack the boar; the young hunter alighted from his horse, saluted the old man, and sat down to rest by his side. The Gallo-Roman opened his arms to the German, and spoke to him of the infinite sweetness of solitude with God. The Bear's cub listened, and left him

Bracchio, in Auvergne.

529.

[1] See above, page 253.

without replying, but already decided in his heart. Soon after he applied himself to learn reading and writing, seeking instruction for that purpose from the priests and monks whom he met on his road. At the end of three years he could read the Psalter. Then, his master having died, he went to join Emilian, who bequeathed to him his hermitage, from which he was taken to re-establish relaxed dis- 576.
cipline at Menat, in that ancient monastery, the mutilated church of which is still admired on the picturesque banks of the Sioule.[1]

But the most frequent results of these encounters were gifts and foundations suggested to the munificence of princes and great men by recollection of the various and deep impressions left upon their souls by the language and aspect of these men of peace and prayer, buried in the depth of the woods. Their intervention in favour of the animals pursued by these powerful hunters, and the right of asylum, so to speak, which they had established for the game in their neighbourhood, almost always led to incidents which, told long after, were transformed and embellished at pleasure, and which

[1] "Nomine Bracchio, quod in eorum lingua interpretatur *ursi catulus* . . . puer discernit non sine grandi admiratione quod aprum, quem inchoaverat sequi ferum, in conspectu senis mansuetum adstare videbat ut agnum."—GREG. TURON., *Vitæ Patr.*, c. 12. Menat is now a district country-town of Puy-de-Dôme. The remains of the Abbey of Menat, restored in the seventh century by St Ménelé, consist of a church still beautiful and curious, which was happily preserved from a modern restoration, between 1843 and 1847, by the intelligence and devotion of the curate, M. Maison.

engraved upon the popular memory, associated themselves by an indissoluble link with the fame and greatness of numerous monasteries whose origin is traced back to these sylvan traditions.

Right of asylum for the game near the monks.

While the chiefs and dependents of the Gallo-Frank aristocracy visited only by intervals, and for the mere pleasure of destruction, the shades under which the entire life of the monks was passed, these recluses naturally lived in a kind of familiarity with the animals which they saw bounding around them, whose instincts and habits they studied at their leisure, and which, in course of time, they easily managed to tame. It might be said that, by a kind of instinctive agreement, they respected each other. In the numberless legends which depict monastic life in the forest, there is not a single example of a monk who was devoured or even threatened by the most ferocious animals; nor do we ever see that they betook themselves to the chase, even when urged by hunger, by which they sometimes suffered to extremity. How, then, can we wonder that, seeing themselves pursued and struck by pitiless strangers, these animals should seek refuge with the peaceful guests of that solitude which they inhabited together? and how can we fail to understand why Christian nations, accustomed for ages to find shelter and protection with the monks from every violence, should love to recall these touching legends which consecrate, under a poetical and popular form, the thought, that the dwelling of the

saints is the inviolable refuge of weakness pursued by strength?[1]

St Calais and his buffalo. 540.

One of the first and most curious examples of these relations between the king and the monks, in which the woodland animals served as intermediary influences, is that of Childebert and the holy abbot Karileff. Karileff was a noble Auvergnat, who, having first been led to Menat, and then become the companion of St Avitus and St Mesmin at Micy, in the Orleannaise, had ended by taking refuge with two companions in a fertile glade in the woods of Maine. Cultivating this unknown corner of the earth, he lived surrounded by all kinds of animals, and, among others, by a wild buffalo, an animal already rare in that country, and which he had succeeded in taming completely. It was a pleasure, says the legend, to see the old man standing by the side of this monster, occupied in caressing him, gently rubbing him between his horns or along his enormous dewlaps and the folds of flesh round his strong neck; after which the animal, grateful, but faithful to its instinct, regained at a gallop the depths of the forest.

Childebert and Ultrogoth.

Childebert, the son of Clovis, is, as we have already said, the great hero of monastic legends. He must have loved the chase as passionately as any of his ancestors or successors, for in almost

[1] M. Charles Louandre, in an article entitled the *Epopée des Animaux* (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, of the 15th December 1853), has perfectly entered into and described the relations of the monks with the wild animals in the forests of Gaul.

all the legends which mention him he is occupied in this pursuit. Arriving in Maine, with Queen Ultrogoth, to pursue his ordinary sport, he heard with joy that a buffalo, an animal almost unknown by that time, had been seen in the neighbourhood. All is arranged next day that this extraordinary chase may have full success; the bows and arrows are prepared in haste, the trail of the beast sought at break of day, the dogs first held in leash, then slipped, and giving voice with full mouth; the historian of the solitary gives us all the details with the gusto of a practised hunter. The terrified buffalo fled to take refuge near the cell of his friend, and when the huntsmen approached they saw the man of God standing beside the beast to protect it. The king was told of it, and, hastening forward indignant, cried in a furious tone, when he saw Karileff in prayer and the buffalo tranquil beside him, "How are you so bold, unknown wretches, as to invade thus an unconceded forest of my domain, and to trouble the greatness of my hunting?" The monk attempted to calm him, and protested that he had come there only to serve God apart from men, and not to despise the sovereign authority or disturb the royal game. "I order thee," answered the king, "thee and thine, to leave this place instantly; woe to thee if thou art found here again!" Having said this he went away scornfully; but had scarcely taken a few steps when his courser stopped short; in vain he struck

his spurs deep into the bleeding flanks of the horse; he could not advance a step. A faithful servant warned him to calm himself. Childebert listened to him, returned towards the saint, and, alighting, received his blessing, drank of the wine of a little vineyard which the solitary had planted near his cell, and, though he found the wine bad enough, kissed the venerable hand that offered it, and ended by bestowing all the lands of the royal treasury in that neighbourhood upon him, that he might build a monastery there. The saint at first refused the donation, but at length accepted as much ground as he could ride round in a day, mounted on his ass; and in this enclosure rose the abbey from which has come the existing city of St Calais.[1]

Returning to the queen, Childebert told her his adventure. Ultrogoth, already much interested in the monks, was eager in her turn to see the holy recluse. She sent to ask his permission to visit him, promising, if he consented, to give him full

[1] "Parentibus secundum seculi dignitatem clarissimis ortus. . . . Locus tantummodo feris eremique familiarissimis animantibus pervius. . . . Erat spectabile videre bubulum, qui in ea provincia difficile est inventu. . . . Lento ungue setas inter cornua mulcentem, nec non colli toros atque palearia tractantem. . . . At ferus hoc contractatu velut benedictione donatus præpeti cursu vastas repetebat solitudines. . . . Signa ejus itineris diu rimata reperiunt . . . acres molossos funibus absolvunt . . . canum latratui credentes. . . . . Invenimus in quodam tugurio hominem nobis incognitum . . . post tergum illius adstantem bubulum. . . . Unde vobis, o incognitæ personæ! tanta præsumptionis audacia, ut ausi sitis . . . nostræ venationis dignitatem . . . mutilare. . . . Est aliquid vini quod parva vitis hic inventa atque exculta elicuit. . . . Poculum rex . . . pro dantis dignitate potius quam pro sui sapore suscepit."—SIVIARDUS, *Vita S. Karileffi*, c. 4, 14, 20.

possession of the entire domain of which he occupied only a part. But Karileff obstinately refused her request. "As long as I live," he said to the envoy of the queen, "I shall never see the face of a woman, and no woman shall ever enter my monastery. And why should this queen be so desirous of seeing a man disfigured by fasts and rural labours, soiled and covered with stains like a chameleon? Besides, I know the deceptions of the old enemy: we must needs defy, even in the horror of the desert, temptations which made Adam lose Paradise, with the happiness of life and his intercourse with God. Say then to the queen that I will pray for her, but that it does not become a monk to sell the sight of his face to a woman, and that, as for her lands, she must give them to whom she will. Say to her that the monks have no need of great possessions, nor she of my blessing; all that she can hope to have from us, her servants, she will have, remaining in her own house."[1]

St Marculph and his hare.

The same Childebert, softened and reconciled to the habits of the monks, appears in the legend of St Marculph, that brave abbot of Cotentin, whose exploits against the Saxon pirates, and friendship with the King of Paris, we have already seen.[2]

[1] "Omnia fisci illius, in cujus parte resident, ei attribuam. . . . Unde talia reginæ ut tantopere me videre exoptet diutinis chameleontis coloribus incultum. . . . Non decet nos. . . . vendere nostrum mulieribus aspectum. . . . Fisci sui partem cui libuerit attribuat."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 28. Compare YEPES, *Coronic. General.*, t. i. pp. 193, 195.

[2] Page 259.

Before his death, the Abbot of Nanteuil went to ask from the king a confirmation of all the numerous gifts which the monasteries founded by him had already received. As he approached Compiègne, where Childebert then resided, and while he rested from the fatigues of his journey in a field upon the bank of the Oise, the king's huntsmen passed him, pursuing a hare. The animal, after many doubles, took refuge under the robe of the abbot. At this sight one of the hunters addressed him rudely: "How darest thou, priest, lay hands upon the king's game? Restore the hare, or I will cut thy throat." Marculph released the hare; but the dogs all at once became motionless, the brutal huntsman fell from his horse, and in falling was seriously injured. At the prayer of his companions in the chase, the saint raised him up and healed him. Then the king, who was hunting in another direction, having heard what had occurred, went to meet his friend, alighted whenever he perceived him, asked his blessing, embraced him tenderly, led him to the castle of Compiègne to spend the night, and granted him all that he asked, in an act of which Queen Ultrogoth and all the royal vassals present were the witnesses and sureties.[1] About 559.

[1] "Qua temeritate, clerice, venationem regis invadere præsumpsisti? Redde eam, alioquin meo gladio interibis. . . . Ex equo quem calcaribus utrimque fodiens ut fugientem consequeretur corruens. . . . Mutuis sese complexibus diu deosculati. . . . Castrum pariter intraverunt prædictum . . . præsentibus regina Ultrogode cæterisque suis optimatibus omnibus attestantibus."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 124.

St Gilles and his doe.

The name of a certain Childebert is also connected in some versions of a famous legend with the memory of one of those holy abbots who were so popular in the middle ages, not only in France, but everywhere, and especially in England and Germany. A young Greek of illustrious birth, named Ægidius,[1] had come, following the steps of Lazarus and of the Magdalene, to the shores of the Mediterranean, and, landing near the mouth of the Rhone, had grown old in solitude, hidden in the depths of a vast forest, without any other nourishment than the milk of a doe which lay in his grotto. But one day as the king of the country, named, according to some, Childebert, King of the Franks, and to others, Flavian, King of the Goths,[2] was following the chase in this forest, the doe was started and pursued into the cavern by the hunters; one of them drew an arrow upon her, which struck the hand which the solitary raised to protect his companion. The king, touched, as these wild but simple natures almost always were, by the sight of this grand old man, almost naked, caused the wound to be dressed, returned often to see him, and at last made him consent to the erection of a monastery upon the site of his grotto, of which he became abbot, and

[1] We have transformed this into St Gilles: in English, St Giles, whose name is borne by a multitude of parishes, and by one of the most populous quarters of London. I Germany, St Ægidius is counted among the fourteen saints specially invoked in all cases of distress, under the name of Auxiliary Saints, *Die Vierzehn Nothhelfer.*

[2] No such name is known among the Gothic kings: the Bollandists suppose it to refer to King Wamba, who reigned from 672 to 680.

where he died in great sanctity. Such was, according to popular tradition,[1] the origin of that celebrated and powerful abbey of St Gilles, which became one of the great pilgrim shrines of the middle ages, and gave birth to a town, the capital of a district whose name was borne with pride by one of the most powerful feudal races, and which retains still a venerable church, classed among our most remarkable monuments of architecture and sculpture.

The British abbess Nennok, and the stag which took refuge in the choir of the nuns.

We meet the same incident in the legend of St Nennok, the young and beautiful daughter of a British king, who gave up a husband whom her father wished to bestow her upon, in order to emigrate to Armorica, and devote herself to monastic life. The prince of the country, pursuing a stag in the neighbourhood of her monastery, saw the animal, half dead with fatigue, take refuge within the holy enclosure, upon which the hounds stopped short, not daring to go farther. Alighting from his horse and entering the church, he found the stag couched at the feet of the young abbess, amid the choir of nuns who were singing the service. He not only granted the animal its life, but himself remained in the community for a whole week, and at the end of that time laid upon the altar an act of donation, granting the surrounding lands to the monastery,

[1] Mabillon (*Annal.*, t. i. p. 99), and especially the Bollandists (vol. i. Sept.), have issued long dissertations upon the times of St Ægidius. He has generally been considered as contemporary with St Cæsarius of Arles, in the sixth century. The Bollandists say the seventh century, and prolong his life to the time of Charles Martel.

with the addition of three hundred horses and mares, and three hundred head of cattle.[1] It is easy to perceive in this history the popular translation of a more natural incident, of the asylum offered by the Abbess Nennok to another daughter of a British king, whom her husband, out of love for monastic life, had forsaken, and who, setting out to seek him through Armorica, had been pursued by a licentious noble, and had found shelter only in the cell of her husband, from whence she passed to the monastery of Lan-Nennok in Plemeur.[2]

St Desle and Clotaire II. 620.

It will be seen hereafter how Clotaire II., when he became master of the Frank monarchy, and was hunting in one of the royal forests of Sequania, pursued an enormous boar into the oratory inhabited by an old Irish monk, Deicolus, who had come to Gaul with St Columba; and, touched by seeing this ferocious beast lying before the little altar where the recluse stranger was at prayer, the king made a donation to him of all the land belonging to the royal treasury in the neighbourhood of his cell. When the donation was made and accepted, the man of God, who had stipulated that the life of the boar should be saved, took care to let him go free, and to protect his flight into the wood.[3]

[1] "Cervus ipse fere extinctus lassitudine, ad ecclesiam sanctæ Dei famulæ conjungit. . . . Dux et ipse veniens descendit . . . cernensque in medio psallentium . . . sanctimonalium choro, ante beatæ pedes virginis mansuefactam bestiam jacuisse."—BOLLAND., t. i. Junii, p. 410.

[2] ALBERT LE GRAND, *Vie de St Efflam*, p. 705.

[3] "Singularem maximumque aprum . . . mitis viri Dei cellam in-

The great feudal vassals, as passionately fond of the chase as were the kings, and as much occupied with it, yielded, like them, to the influence of the monks when the latter appeared before them to protect the companions of their solitude. Basolus, born of a noble race in Limousin, and founder of the monastery of Viergy,[1] in the hill country of Reims, having built a cell in the depth of the forest, sheltered by a stone cross, and where his whole furniture consisted of a little lettern admirably sculptured, to bear the Holy Scriptures on which he meditated unceasingly, was one day disturbed in his devotions by a great boar, which laid itself at his feet, as if to ask mercy for its life. Following the animal, came on horseback one of the most powerful lords of the neighbourhood, Attila, whom the mere glance of the solitary brought to a standstill, and rendered motionless. He was a good man at bottom, says the legend, though a great hunter: he evidenced this by making a gift to the abbot of all he possessed round the cell. Four centuries after, this tradition remained so fresh, that by an agreement, scrupulously observed, the game hunted in the forest of Reims was always spared, both by the

St Basle and his boar. 570-620.

greditur . . . ante altare accubare. . . . Viri Dei jussione absque ullius læsione consueta cum impetu petiit lustra."—*Vita S. Deicoli*, c. 13.

[1] *Viriziacum*—the same which afterwards took the name of St Basle. This Basolus must not be confounded with the Arverne chief, prisoner of Clovis, and saved by his daughter, who has been mentioned before, page 252.

dogs and hunters, when it could reach the little wood over which the cross of St Basle rose.[1]

And it was not only from man, but from other animals that the compassionate solitaries protected the creatures whom they had accepted as guests of their solitude.

St Laumer and his doe.

Launomar, of whom we have already quoted several anecdotes, was wandering in his forest of Perche, chanting psalms, when he encountered a doe flying from some wolves. He saw in this the symbol of a Christian soul pursued by devils: he wept for pity, and then cried to the wolves, "Cruel wretches, return to your dens, and leave this poor little animal; the Lord wills that she should be snatched from your bloody fangs." The wolves stopped at his voice, and turned back upon the road. "See, then," said he to his companion, "how the devil, the most ferocious of wolves, is always seeking some one to devour in the Church of Christ." However, the doe followed him, and he passed two hours in caressing her before he sent her away.[2]

[1] "Natu et genere nobilissimus. . . . Inter condensa silvarum fruteta . . . quæ crux integerrima ibi permanet usque in præsentem diem. . . . Lectoriolum ligneum sculpturæ artis pulcherrima specie compositum. . . . Quidam præpotens . . . venandi gratia (ud illud genus est hominum) . . . sicut erat vir bonus. . . . Hispida bellua quasi vitæ suæ imploratura præsidium. . . . Extunc mos inolevisse . . . et usque hodie observatur, ut si . . . quælibet fuerit venatio, postquam illius intra aggestum silvulæ."—Adso (992), *Vita S. Basoli*, c. 7, 22, 23.

[2] "Cruenti persecutores, ad ergastula revertimini . . . hanc vestris eruet illæsam rictibus. . . . Desistite persequi hanc bestiolam. . . . Quam palpans homo Dei manu suâ post duas horas remisit."—Act. SS. O. B., t. i. pp. 319, 324.

The ancient authors who record these incidents, and many others of the same kind, are unanimous in asserting that this supernatural empire of the old monks over the animal creation is explained by the primitive innocence which these heroes of penitence and purity had won back, and which placed them once more on a level with Adam and Eve in the terrestrial Paradise. The rage of the ferocious beasts, says one, is subdued into obedience to him who lives the life of the angels, as it was to our first parents before the fall.[1] The dignity, says another, which we had lost by the transgression of Adam was regained by the obedience of the saints, although the world was no more an Eden to them, and they had to bear the weight of all its distresses. Our first father received from the Creator the right of naming every living creature, and subduing them to his will. "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Was it not by the same right that the beasts of the forest obeyed and attached themselves to these holy men like humble disciples?[2] Is it wonderful, says Bede, that he who faithfully and loyally obeys the Creator of the universe, should, in his turn, see all the creatures obedient to his orders and his wishes?[3] Two

Supernatural empire of the monks over the animals.

[1] *Vita S. Launom.*, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 319.
[2] *Vita S Karilefi*, c. 23.
[3] "Qui enim auctori omnium creaturarum fideliter et integro corde

thousand years before Redemption, in the solitudes of Idumea, it had been predicted of the just man reconciled to God that he should live in peace with the wild beasts. "And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."[1]

Miracles in history.

The dignity of history loses nothing by pausing upon these tales, and the pious trust supported by them. Written by a Christian, and for Christians, history would lie to herself if she affected to deny or ignore the supernatural intervention of Providence in the life of the saints chosen by God to guide, console, and edify his faithful people, and, by a holy example, to elevate them above the bonds and necessities of terrestrial life. Certainly, fables are sometimes mixed with truth; imagination has allied itself to authentic tradition to alter or supersede it; and there have even been guilty frauds which have abused the faith and piety of our ancestors. But justice had been done on these by the jealous and learned criticism of those great masters of historic science whom the religious orders have furnished to the world, long before the systematic disdain and adventurous theories of our contemporary authorities had profited by some inexactitudes and exaggerations, to throw back the whole of Catholic tradition into the rank of those semi-historic, semi-poetic mythologies, which pre-

famulatur, non est mirandum si ejus imperiis ac votis omnis creatura deserviat."—BEDE, in *Vita S. Cuthb.*, c. 13.

[1] Job, v. 23.

cede every incomplete civilisation. There is not a writer of authority among us who would hesitate to repeat these fine expressions of a true Christian philosopher: "Some men have supposed it a mark of great piety to tell little lies in favour of the articles of religion. That is as dangerous as it is useless: they thus run the risk of making men doubt what is true out of hatred for that which is false; and besides, our piety has so many truths to nourish it, that lies exist at their expense, like cowardly soldiers in an army of brave men."[1]

All Christian writers have spoken and thought thus; but their minds have been no less influenced by the sentiment which dictated to Titus Livius, a pagan of the age of Augustus, these noble words, which no Christian pen would disavow: "I am not ignorant that the vulgar spirit which does not desire the interference of the gods in present affairs is opposed to the publication of the wonders of the past; but whilst I narrate the things of old, it appears to me that my heart itself enters into the period of which I write; I feel that religious respect constrains me to reproduce in my annals what so many wise men have thought it their duty to collect for posterity."[2]

[1] "Fuere qui magnæ pietatis loco ducerent mendaciola pro religione confingere: quod et periculosum est, ne veris adimatur fides propter falsa, et minime necessarium; quoniam proprietate nostra tam multa sunt vera, ut falsa tanquam ignavi milites atque inutiles oneri sint magis quam auxilio."—LUDOV. VIVES, *De Tradendis Disciplinis*, lib. v.

[2] "Non sum nescius ut eadem negligentia qua nihil Deos portendere vulgo nunc credant, neque nuntiari admodum ulla prodigia in publicum,

The Church, however, could not be answerable for those errors or falsehoods which have crept into some legends. She obliges no one to believe any of these prodigies, even the best verified which we find related in them. But when such events are recorded by serious authors, and especially by contemporaries, the Church, herself founded upon miracles, acknowledges and commends them to the admiration of Christians, as a proof of the faithful-

neque in annales referri: cæterum et mihi, vetustas res scribenti, nescio quo pacto antiquus fit animus: et quædam religio tenet, quæ illi prudentissimi viri publice suscipienda censuerint, ea pro dignis habere, quæ in meos annales referam."—TIT. LIV., lib. xliii. c. 13.

I may be permitted to quote here a fine passage, which has not been sufficiently admired, from Count de Maistre:—

"With regard to *mythology*, hear us still further. Without doubt, all religion *gives rise* to a mythology; but do not forget, dear Count, what I add to that statement, that the *mythology of the Christian religion is always chaste, always useful, and often sublime*, without it being possible, by a particular privilege, to confound it with religion itself. . . . Hear, I pray you, a single example; it is taken from I know not what ascetic book, the name of which has escaped me:—

"A saint, whose very name I have forgotten, had a vision, in which he saw Satan standing before the throne of God, and, listening, he heard the evil spirit say, 'Why hast thou condemned me, who have offended thee but once, whilst thou savest thousands of men who have offended thee many times?' God answered him, 'Hast thou ONCE asked pardon of me?'

"Behold the Christian mythology! It is the dramatic truth, which has its worth and effect independently of the literal truth, and which even gains nothing by being fact. What matter whether the saint *had* or *had not* heard the sublime words which I have just quoted? The great point is to know that *pardon is refused only to him who does not ask it*. St Augustine has said, in a manner not less sublime: *Dost thou fear God? conceal thyself in his arms* (Vis fugere a Deo? fuge ad Deum). To you, my dear Count, this is perhaps as striking; but for the crowd much is necessary. I say *perhaps*, for, be it said between ourselves, all the world is commonplace on this point; and I know no person whom dramatic instruction does not strike more than the finest morals of metaphysics."—*Lettres*, t. i. p. 235.

ness of His promises, who has said of himself, that "He will be glorified in his saints," and that "he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."

It is, then, both just and natural to register these pious traditions, without pretending to assign the degree of certainty which belongs to them, or, on the other hand, to put limits to the omnipotence of God. They will not disturb the minds of those who know the legitimate necessities of nations accustomed to live specially by faith, and what are the riches of divine mercy towards humble and faithful hearts. Touching and sincere echoes of the faith of our fathers, they have nourished, charmed, and consoled twenty generations of energetic and fervent Christians during the most productive and brilliant ages of Christendom. Authentic or not, there is not one which does not do honour to human nature, and which does not establish some victory of weakness over strength, or good over evil.

It is certain, besides, that to our forefathers, to the Gallo-Franks, from whom we have the honour of being descended, the miracle seemed one of the most ordinary and simple conditions of the action of God upon the world.[1] The marvels which we have related were received by them as the natural result of innocence restored by sacrifice. To the eyes of recently-converted nations, dazzled by so many

[1] Dom Pitra, *Histoire de St Léger*, p. xcii.

great and holy examples, even when their faith remained dull and their manners ferocious, a man completely master of himself became once more master of nature. And the animals who approached these marvellous men were themselves transformed, and attained to a clearer intelligence and more lasting gentleness. All kinds of attaching qualities, and natural relations with the existence of men who isolated themselves from their fellow-creatures to live in community with nature, were found in them. Whilst the monastic doctors found pleasure in seeking subjects of instruction, or analogies with the conditions and trials of religious life,[1] in the peculiarities of their instincts and habits, more or less faithfully observed, the faithful united in attributing to the holy monks, as companions, servants, and almost friends, familiar animals whose society peopled their solitude, and whose docility lightened their labours. This intelligence and sympathy with the animals, as with all animate nature, is a distinctive characteristic of the monastic legend. Antique fables may sometimes reappear there, but always to be transfigured to the advantage of a holy belief or a difficult virtue.

And the most authentic narratives confirmed these pious traditions. In that history of the Fathers of

[1] See the curious tract of S. Pierre Damien, *De Bono Religiosi Status et Variarum Animantium Tropologis* (op. 52), in which he draws an example of monastic virtue from the habits of all the animals, real or fabulous, with which the natural history of his times (such as was set forth in the *Bestiaires*, the *Physiologus*, &c.) had made him acquainted.

the Desert which was commenced by St Athanasius and St Jerome, there are a thousand incidents, more or less well established, which show us the most ferocious animals at the feet of Anthony, Pacome, Macarius, Hilarion, and their emulators. At each page are to be seen the wild asses, the crocodiles, the hippopotami, the hyænas, and especially the lions, transformed into respectful companions and docile servants of these prodigies of sanctity; and the conclusion drawn is, not that the animals had reasonable souls, but that God glorified those who devoted themselves to his glory by showing thus how all nature obeyed man before he was shut out from Paradise for his disobedience. Let us confine ourselves to the touching history of Gerasimus, the Christian Androcles, abbot of a monastery on the banks of the Jordan, who had drawn a thorn out of the foot of a lion, and whom the grateful animal would never abandon. The terrible beast was, after a fashion, received as a member of the community: he lived upon milk and boiled herbs like the monks; he drew water from the Jordan for the wants of the monastery; and when the old abbot died the lion followed him to his grave and died there, howling with grief.[1]

The monks of the Thebaid and the wild animals.

Gerasimus and his lion.

[1] "Venit leo in monasterium et quærebat senem suum. . . . Dicebant ei: Migravit senex ad Dominum. . . . Et stans abbas Sabbatius supra sepulcrum abbatis Gerasimi dixit leoni: Ecce hic senex noster sepultus est: et inclinavit genua supra sepulcrum senis. . . . Cum ergo id leo audisset et vidisset . . . tunc et ipse prostravit se . . . et rugiens ita continuo defunctus est super sepulcrum senis."—JOAN. MOSCHUS, *De Vit. Patr.*, lib. x. p. 894.

The Gaul, Sulpicius Severus, who must be regarded as the most ancient of our religious annalists, and who had studied monastic institutions in the East, confirms in his *Dialogues* all that Eastern writers have said on this subject. He relates the facts of which he himself had been witness in the Thebaid: how, in traversing the desert, he had seen the monk who accompanied him offer the fruit of the palm to a lion whom they met, which he ate quietly and peacefully like any domestic animal; and how, in the hut of another solitary, a she-wolf appeared regularly every evening at the supper-hour, and waited at the door till she was called to eat the remains of the little repast, after which she licked the hand of her host, who caressed her familiarly.[1]

Sulpicius Severus wrote, when he had returned into his own country, the life of St Martin, the first apostle of cenobitical life in Gaul. He there relates that the great bishop, visiting his diocese and walking along the banks of the Loire, followed by a numerous crowd, perceived the aquatic birds named plungeons pursuing and devouring the fish. "Behold," said he, "the image of the devil: see how he lays his snares for the im-

St Martin and his plungeons. 316-397.

[1] "Habebam unum ex fratribus ducem locorum peritum. . . . Fera paululum modesta. . . . Accepit tam libere quam ullum animal domesticum; et cum comedisset, abscessit. . . . Alium æque singularem virum vidimus in parvi tugurio. . . . Lupa ei solita erat adstare cœnanti . . . panem qui cœnulæ superfuisset. . . . Manu blanda caput triste permulcet."—SULP. SEVER., *Dial.*, i. c. 7.

prudent, how he devours them, and how he is never satisfied." And immediately he commanded these aquatic birds to leave the waters in which they swam, and to dwell henceforth in the desert. At his voice, says the historian, and to the great admiration of the multitude, the birds, obeying him, came out of the river, and flew in a body to the skirts of the neighbouring forests.[1]

Who does not remember the raven who, according to St Jerome, carried a half-loaf every day to the hermit Paul, and who brought him a whole one the day that Anthony went to visit him? Like his great brethren in the East, the patriarch of the Western monks had also his familiar bird, which, however, came to receive its food instead of bringing food to him. St Gregory the Great, in his biography of Benedict, records that, while still at his first monastery of Subiaco, a raven from the neighbouring forest came to the saint at every meal and was fed out of his own hand.[2]

St Benedict and his raven. 492-503.

These tales, piously recorded by the highest genius which the Church has possessed, prepare us to listen without surprise to many other traits of the familiar intimacy of the monks with the inferior creatures.

[1] "Cum suo illo, ut semper frequentissimo . . . comitatu, mergos in flumine conspicatur. . . . Forma, inquit, hæc dæmonum est. . . . Ita grege facto omnes in unum illæ volucres congregate . . . non sine admiratione multorum."—SULP. SEV., *Epist.*, iii. The popular name of *Martins-pêcheurs* given to these birds is probably derived from this legend.

[2] "Ad horam refectionis illius ex vicina silva corvus venire consueverat, et panem de manu ejus accipere."—S. GREG. MAGN., *Dial.*, ii. 8.

The monks and the birds in Gaul.

Sometimes wild sparrows, as the legend goes, came down from the trees to gather grains of corn or crumbs of bread from the hand of that Abbot

Maixent.

Maixent before whom Clovis knelt, on his return from his victory over Alaric; and the nations thus learned how great was his humility and gentleness.[1] Sometimes other little woodland birds came to seek

Walaric.

their food and to be caressed by that Walaric who will shortly appear before us as one of the most illustrious disciples of St Columba, the apostle of Ponthieu, and the founder of the great monastery of Leuconaus. Charmed with this gentle company, when his disciples approached, and when the larks fluttered terrified round him, he stopped the monks while still at a distance, and signed to them to draw back. "My sons," he said, "do not frighten my little friends, do them no harm: let them satisfy themselves with what we have left."[2] On

Karileff.

another occasion Karileff, when binding up and pruning his little vineyard, the poor produce of which he had offered to King Childebert, stifled by the heat, had taken off his frock and hung it upon an oak; and when, at the end of the hard day's labour, he took down his monastic habit, he found

[1] "Multoties aves feræ relictis nemorum ramis. . . . Cum indomiti passeres in dextera illius mensæ reliquias colligebant, mansuetudinem et sanctitatem ejus populi compererant."—*Vita S. Maxent.*, c. 3; ACT., t. i. p. 561.

[2] "Ut . . . articulis suis quandocumque vellet, oblitas suæ feritatis et quasi domesticas eas palparet. . . . Circumquaque volitantes aves. . . . Filii, non faciamus eis injuriam, sed permittamus eas paullulum satiari de micis."—*Vita S. Walarici*, c. 26.

that a wren, the smallest and most curious bird in our climate, had nestled there and laid an egg. The holy man was so touched with joy and admiration, that he passed the whole night in praising God.[1] A similar anecdote is related of St Malo, one of the great monastic apostles who has left his name to a diocese in the northern part of Armorica; but with this difference, that the latter permitted the bird to continue in his mantle till her brood was hatched.[2] Tradition becomes more and more blended with the dreams of imagination in proportion as it penetrates back into Celtic legends: one of which records that when Keivin, another Breton monk, prayed with his hands extended, the birds laid their eggs there.[3]

Malo.

The animals naturally sought and preferred to dwell in the domains of masters who were so gentle and paternal; from which arises the amusing story of the monk Maglorius and Count Loiescon. This rich Armorican count, whom Maglorius had cured of leprosy, made him a gift of the half of a great estate, bathed by the sea. Maglorius having come to take possession, all the birds which filled the

Maglorius and his fishes.

[1] "Vitem circumfodiendo et superflua quæque resecando. Sudore laboris coacto, vestimentum quod Cucullam vocant. . . . Avicula perexigua, cujus vocabulum est bitriscus, dum . . . juxta familiarem sibi consuetudinem intima quæque quadam curiositate perluserat. . . . Inæstimabile gaudium cum admiratione mixtum eum occupavit."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 12.

[2] "Dimisit cappam donec, fotis ovis, pullos in tempore excluderet avicula."—SIGEB. GEMBLAC., *Vita S. Maclovii*, c. 15, ap. SUR., t. vi. p. 378. Compare ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 180.

[3] OZANAM, *Etudes Germaniques*, t. ii. p. 96.

woods on the estate, and all the fishes which inhabited its shore, precipitated themselves in a troop towards the portion which came to the monk, as if declaring that they would have no other lord but him. When the count, and particularly his wife, saw the half of the estate which they retained thus depopulated, they were dismayed, and insisted that Maglorius should exchange with them. But when the exchange was made, the birds and fishes immediately followed Maglorius, going and coming, so as always to keep in the portion of the monks.[1]

Sites of monasteries pointed out by animals.

And it was the animals who spontaneously indicated the predestined sites of great monastic foundations. In relating the history of the martyr-monk, St Leger, we shall see the position of Fecamp, on the Neustrian coast, which served him both as a prison and asylum, pointed out to the Duke Ansegise by a stag which he was hunting.

St Thierry and the white eagle.

It was told in Champagne, that when Theodoric, the son of a famous bandit, but himself almoner and secretary to St Remy, the great apostle of the Franks, desired to found a house which he might himself retire to, and was seeking a site for it, he saw a white eagle hovering in the air, which seemed to mark out by its slow and circular motion the enclosure of the future monastery; after the erection

[1] "Comes valde divitiarum opibus obsitus . . . qui multam in medios erogaverat substantiam. . . . Multitudo copiosa avium miræ magnitudinis et pulchræ . . . captura ingens piscium congeries . . . partem S. Maglorii, ipsius præsentiæ ac si Domino suo debitæ servitutis obsequium præstans, expetiit."—MABILLON, ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 212.

of the famous abbey, which took the name of St Thierry; this miraculous eagle appeared in the same place every year.[1]

In the following century, St Nivard, Archbishop of Reims, visiting his diocese on foot, arrived in the fine country which overlooks the course of the Marne, opposite Epernay; and, finding himself fatigued, slept under the shade of a great beech, on the knees of his companion, Berchaire. During his sleep he saw a dove descend from heaven upon the tree, and, after marking the same circuit three times by flying round it, reascend to the skies. Berchaire, who had not slept, saw the same vision. They agreed to build an abbey there, which was called Hautvillers. Berchaire was its first abbot; and the high altar rose upon the same spot where the tree had stood when the dove alighted,[2] a sweet symbol of the tranquil innocence which was to reign there.

Foundation of Hautvillers. 662-670.

But a still closer degree of intercourse between the monks and animated nature appears in the annals of these early ages. Innumerable are the legends which show these wild animals obedient to the voice of the monks, reduced to a kind of domestic condition by the men of God, obliged to

Domestication of the wild animals by the monks.

[1] "Mittitur de sublimibus aliger in similitudinem aquilæ Angelus. . . . Intelligunt devoti cultores Dei continuo divinum esse missum."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., *sæc.* i. t. i. p. 597. Compare FRODOARD, *Hist. Remens.*, i. 24; BAUGIER, *Mémoires Hist. de Champagne*, t. i. p. 32.

[2] ACT. SS. O. S. B., *sæc.* ii. t. ii. p. 802; BAUGIER, p. 48.—Similar anecdotes are related of the foundation of Montfaucon and Avenay, in the same canton. This Berchaire is the same monk of Luxeuil who afterwards founded Montier-en-Der, in the south of Champagne.

serve and follow them. We shall have to tell, from contemporary narratives, how the illustrious founder of Luxeuil, St Columba, in traversing the forests of the southern Vosges, saw the squirrels descend from the trees, to leap upon his hands and hide themselves in the folds of his cowl; how he made the bears obey him; and how he passed with safety through troops of wolves, who rubbed against his dress without daring to touch him.[1]

St Corbinian and his bear.

The same legends are to be found on the coast of Armorica as on the banks of the Danube. Now it is Corbinian, the Frank monk who founded the bishopric of Freysingen, and who, crossing the Tyrol to go to Rome, obliged the bear who had killed one of his baggage-horses to take upon his own back the burden of his victim, and thus to accompany him to Rome.[2] Now it is Samson, the metropolitan of Dol, who, seeing his monks disturbed by the cries of the wild birds, collected them all together one night in the court of the monastery, imposing silence upon them, and the next morning dismissed them, forbidding them to recommence their cry, an interdiction which "they observed inviolably."[3]

Celtic legends.

[1] JONAS, *Vita S. Columbani*, c. 15, 27, 30.

[2] "Mitte super eum sellam saginariam et sterne illum, et saginam super illum impone, et duc cum aliis caballis in viam nostram. . . . Impositam sibi saginam ipse ursus quasi domesticus equus Romam usque perduxit, ibique a viro Dei dimissus abiit viam suam."—ARIBO, *Vita S. Corbin.*, c. 11, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. iii. An anecdote almost similar is told of St Martin, Abbot of Vertou in Brittany, during his pilgrimage to Rome.—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 362.

[3] ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 423.

Now it is Renan, the anchorite of Cornouaille, who commanded a wolf to give up the sheep of a poor peasant, which it was carrying away, and who was obeyed on the instant. Or, again, the blind Herve, patron of the popular singers of Armorica, whose dog had been devoured by a wolf, and who compelled this wolf humbly to take the dog's place, and, secured in a leash, to accompany him in his wanderings.[1] The wolves tamed by the monks

The wolves are everywhere to be met with, and appear again in the legend of St Malo. Forced by his persecutors to hide himself in a solitude of Saintonge, he was discovered by the crowd attracted there to see a tame wolf, which, having devoured the ass of the solitary, came every day to seek the ass's paniers, in order to fill them with the wood which he had to collect in the forest.[2] St Malo.

But none of the monastic apostles of our little Brittany ever surpassed, in this respect, that Paul who has left his name to the city and diocese of St Pol-de-Leon, and whose empire over the most ferocious animals was absolute, and of great advantage to the population. Once he compelled a buffalo, who St Paul de Leon.

[1] HERSART DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *Légende Celtique*, p. 264. Albert le Grand relates that St Herve being once lodged in a manor "very much surrounded by reservoirs and fish-ponds," but in which he was much incommoded by the croaking of the frogs, he imposed on them everlasting silence, "and immediately the little creatures killed themselves, in as short a time as if they had had their throats cut."—P. 318.

[2] "Viderat quotidie lupum ad horam venire et cum clitellis quas asinus portare solebat prout sustinere poterat ligna deferre."—*Vita S. Maclovii*, c. 18, ap. MABILLON.

had overthrown and broken in pieces with his horns a cell which a monk had built near the fountain where the animal came to drink, to disappear permanently in the depths of the forest. Another time, he tamed and reduced to a state of domestication a ferocious she-bear and her cubs, whose race was long marked and preserved by the country people.[1] Here it was an enormous bear, who drew back before him, till she fell into a ditch and broke her neck. There it was a crocodile or sea-serpent, who had put the count of the canton to flight with all his soldiers, whom Paul compelled to throw itself into the sea, upon that point of the coast of Cornouaille where a whirlpool called *l'Abîme du Serpent* is still shown.[2]

The legend does not stop mid-way: it adds that, seeing the monastery inhabited by his sister upon the sea-shore threatened by the high tides, he made the sea draw back four thousand paces, and commanded the nuns to mark the new boundary of the waters with stones, "which, on the instant, in-

[1] "Sus silvatica, ad cujus ubera sugentes dependebant porcelluli . . . ferocissima, beati viri molliter blandita, ac si prioribus annis fuit edomita, deinceps permansit domestica, ita ut per plures annos illic duraverit progenies ejus inter reliquos patriæ porcos quasi regalis et præcipua."—BOLLAND, t. ii. *Martii*, pp. 116, 117. The same incident is found in the legend of St Imier, founder of the town of that name in the Bernois Jura.—Ap. TROUILLAT, *Monum. de l'Evêché de Bâle*, i. p. 37.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 118. With this legend is connected the origin of the house of *Kergounadec*, a proper name which signifies, in Breton, *he who has no fear*, because its progenitor was the only individual in all the parish of Cleder who dared to accompany St Paul in his expedition against the serpent: "quæ non magnam apud nos fidem obtinent," add the prudent Bollandists.

creased into great and high rocks, to bridle the fury of the waves." It is easy to understand how, under the thatched roof of the Celtic peasant's hut, the works of embankment, which were doubtless superintended by the Breton emigrant who was the first bishop of the diocese, should be interpreted thus.

Traditions relative to the influence exercised by the monks over the wild animals, not only for their personal service, but for the advancement of their labours in the clearance and cultivation of the country, abound especially in Armorica and the other Celtic countries. Thegonnec, another Breton abbot, had the materials for his church carried by a wolf. And Herve, whom we have just quoted, made a wolf labour like an ox. "It was wonderful," says the legend, "to see this wolf live in the same stable with the sheep without harming them, draw the plough, bear burdens, and do everything else like a domestic animal."[1]

The stags at the service of the monks.

In this dramatic struggle of the monks with nature, the wolves, as has been seen, played the most habitual part; but the stags sometimes disputed with them the first place in these wonderful transformations. In Ireland two stags drew to its last dwelling-place the body of Kellac, hermit and bishop, assassinated by his four disciples, who, before murdering him, had kept him shut up for a whole night in the hollow of an oak which was as

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 193.

large as a cavern.[1] The abbey of Lancarvan, in Gambria, drew its name and origin from the memory of two stags which the Irish disciples of St Cadok had yoked to a cart laden with wood for the monastery.[2] Colodocus, hermit and bishop, having refused to give up a stag which had taken refuge in his hermitage to the noble who pursued it, the furious hunter took away seven oxen and a cow which the solitary and his disciples used in their labours. The next morning eight stags came out of the wood, and offered themselves to the yoke to replace the cattle carried off from him who had saved the life of their companion.[3]

Colodocus.

St Leonor and the stags in the plough.

The legend of St Leonor follows, one of the finest pearls from the precious casket of Celtic tradition. Leonor was one of those monk-bishops who came from the British Islands in the sixth century like Samson, Maglorius, and Brieuc, to evangelise the Celts of Armorica. Having established himself in a desert position, at the mouth of the Rance, where he and his sixty disciples could live only on the produce of the chase and fisheries, he saw one day, when praying, a little white bird settle at his feet, which carried in its beak an ear of corn. "There was, then, upon this wild waste some spot where corn could grow, where even some ears of corn were

[1] "In vasti roboris caudicem, ad caveæ similitudinem vacuatum, compingunt."—BOLLAND., t. i. *Maii*, p. 106.

[2] LA VILLEMARQUÉ, op. cit., p. 156.

[3] ALBERT LE GRAND, *Vie de St Ké ou Kenan, surnommé Colodoc*, p. 677.

growing." The saint thanked God, and directed one of his monks to follow the bird, who led him to a glade in the neighbouring forest, where some plants of wheat had been preserved by re-sowing themselves—the last remnant, perhaps, of a rich cultivation which had disappeared from these regions with the inhabitants who brought it there. At this news the saint intoned the *Te Deum;* and the next morning, at break of day, having first sung matins, all the community took the road, with Leonor at their head, towards the forest, to cut it down. This work lasted long: the monks, overcome by fatigue, entreated their father to abandon that overwhelming task, and to seek other soil less hard to labour. He refused to listen to them, telling them it was the devil who sent to them that temptation to idleness. But it was still worse when, the forest cut down, the cleared soil had to be cultivated. Then the monks resolved to leave their leader there, and fly during the night. But they were reassured and consoled by seeing twelve noble stags coming of themselves to be yoked to the ploughs, like so many pairs of oxen. After having ploughed all day, when they were loosed in the evening, they returned to their lair in the depth of the wood, but only to return on the morning of the next day. This lasted for five weeks and three days, until the new fields were prepared to yield an abundant harvest. After which the twelve stags

disappeared, carrying with them the blessing of the bishop emigrant.[1]

The Bollandists, with their habitual prudence, take care to make a protest of their incredulity with respect to these travesties of historic truth.[2] An ingenious and learned man of our own times has pointed out their true and legitimate origin. According to him, after the gradual disappearance of the Gallo-Roman population, the oxen, horses, and dogs had returned to a savage state, and it was in the forests that the British missionaries had to seek these animals to employ them anew for domestic uses. The miracle consisted in restoring to man the empire and use of the creatures which God had given him for instruments. This re-domestication of animals which had relapsed into a savage condition, is one of the most interesting episodes in the civilising mission of the ancient cenobites.[3]

Agricultural labours of the monks in the forests.

However, their whole existence in the forests was a series of painful and persevering labours, of which posterity and the neighbouring populations were to reap the benefit. The mere clearance of the forests, undertaken successively in all quarters of Gaul, and pursued with unwearied constancy by

[1] "Ecce unus passer candidissimus spicam frumenti in ore tenens. . . . Cœperunt lassi deficere. . . . Pater, oramus te ut de loco isto recedas. . . . Fessi præ nimio labore. . . . Duodecim grandissimos cervos. . . . Dei virtute domesticos. . . . Benedicens dixit: Ite in pace. . . . Densissimas sylvas expetunt." — BOLLAND., t. i. *Jul.*, pp. 121, 125. Compare LA BORDERIE, *Discours sur les Saints Bretons.*

[2] Comment. Prævv., No. 9.

[3] LA BORDERIE, op. cit.

the spade and axe of the monk, was of the greatest service to future generations. The destruction of the woods, which has now become alarming, and even in some cases a real calamity, was then the first of necessities. It was, besides, carried on with prudence and moderation. Ages passed before the scarcity of wood was felt, even in the sad southern provinces, from which woodland growth seems to have disappeared for ever; and during these ages the monks continued without intermission to cut down the great masses of forest—to pierce them, to divide them, to open them up, and even to make great clearings here and there, which continually increased, and were put into regular cultivation. They carried labour, fertility, human strength and intelligence into those solitudes which till then had been abandoned to wild beasts, and to the disorder of spontaneous vegetation. They devoted their entire life to transforming into rich pastures and fields carefully sown and ploughed, a soil which was bristling with woods and thickets.

It was not a pleasant, short, or easy task: to accomplish it, all the energy of wills freely submitted to faith, all the perseverance produced by the spirit of association, joined to a severe discipline, was needed. This persevering energy never failed them. Nowhere did they draw back, or restore voluntarily to the desert that which they had once undertaken to reclaim. On the contrary, we see them reach the extreme limit of human power

in their field labours and the standing-ground they gained; disputing with the ice, the sand, and the rocks, the last fragments of soil that could be cultivated; installing themselves sometimes in marshes, up to that time supposed inaccessible; sometimes among firwoods laden with hoarfrost the whole year through. Sometimes it was necessary to have recourse to fire as the means of opening a road through the wood, and getting rid of the old trunks which would have rendered all cultivation impossible. But most generally it was spade in hand that they went before to clear a space of soil sufficient to be sown or to become a meadow. They began in the immediate neighbourhood of the primitive cell,[1] generally placed near a water-course, which helped in the formation of meadows. By degrees the clearing extended further, and even into the thickest shades. Great oaks fell to be replaced by harvests. These monks, most of whom had studied literature, were doubtless reminded then of the fine verses of Lucan—

"Tunc omnia late
Procumbunt nemora et spoliantur robore silvæ . . .
Sed fortes tremuere manus, motique verenda
Majestate loci . . .
Procumbunt orni, nodosa impellitur ilex . . .
Tunc primum posuere comas, et fronde carentes
Admisere diem, propulsaque roborĕ denso
Sustinuit se silva cadens."[2]

[1] "In medio vastæ eremi atque condensæ. . . . Cum monachis suis silvam succidere . . . certabat ut planitiem parare aliquam posset aptam jaciendis seminibus."—*Vita S. Launom.*, c. 8, 10.

[2] *Pharsalia*, iii. 394-445.

The humble prose of our monastic annals reproduces this picture a hundred times in Latin less pure and less magnificent, but which has, nevertheless, the powerful charm of reality and simplicity. When St Brieuc and his eighty monks from Great Britain landed in Armorica, and marked the site on which the town which afterwards bore his name was erected, they proceeded, like the soldiers of Cæsar, into the forests sacred to the Druids. They surveyed the ancient woods at first with curiosity, says the chronicle; they searched on all sides through these immemorial shades. They reached at last a valley branching out to either hand, the sides of which were everywhere clothed with fresh foliage, and divided by a transparent stream. Immediately they all set to work: they overthrew the great trees, they rooted out the copse, they cut down the brushwood and undergrowth; in a short time they had converted the impenetrable thicket into an open plain. This done, they had recourse to the spade and hoe; they dug and weeded the soil, and wrought it with minute care, thus putting it into a condition to produce abundant harvests.[1]

Clearance made by St Brieuc and his disciples.

[1] "Illustrantibus illis arboreta maxima curiosius, annosaque fruteta circumquaque perscrutantibus in vallem binam deveniunt. . . . Vallem nemorum amœnitate confertam perambulans, fontem lucidissimum, aquis prospicuum. . . . Accinguntur omnes operi, diruunt arbores, succidunt fruteta, avelluut vepres spinarumque congeriem, silvamque densissimam in brevi reducunt in planitiem. . . . Vellebant plerumque glebas ligonibus: exolebatur deinceps humus sarculis, sulcisque minutissime exaratis." —*Vie de S. Brieuc*, by the canon of La Devison, 1627, quoted by La Borderie.

Fruit-trees. Frequently they replaced the forest trees with fruit-trees; like that Telio, a British monk, who planted with his own hands, aided by St Samson, an immense orchard, or, as the legend says, a true forest of fruit-trees, three miles in extent, in the neighbourhood of Dol.[1] To him is attributed the introduction of the apple-tree into Armorica, where cider continues the national beverage. Others

Vines. planted vines in a favourable exposure, and succeeded in acclimatising it in those northern districts of Gaul afterwards known as Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy, where the inhabitants have not succeeded in preserving it.[2] They also gave particular attention to the care of bees, as has been already testified by the agreement between the Abbot of Dol and the Bishop of Paris.[3] No trade seemed too hard for them, those of the carpenter and mason being as readily adopted as those of the wood-cutter

Various labours. and gardener. One ground, in the mill which he had himself made, the wheat which he was to eat;[4] another hollowed out a reservoir of stone round the fountain which he had discovered, or which had sprung up in answer to his prayers, that others

[1] "Magnum nemus." This orchard still existed in the twelfth century, under the name of *Arboretum Teliavi et Sansonis*.—La Borderie, op. cit., p. 39.

[2] "Parva vitis hic inventa atque exculta."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 16. "Quo tempore a climate meridiano distantem a prædicto cœnobio passus fere quingentos. . . . B. Wandresigilus vineam plantare et excolere cœpit."—*Vita S. Ansperti*, c. 11.

[3] See above, p. 276. Compare *Vita S. Pauli*, ap. Bolland., t. ii. *Mart.*, p. 121; *Vita S. Amati*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii.

[4] *Vita S. Gildasii*, ap. La Borderie, loc. cit.

might enjoy it after him;[1] and grateful posterity has taken care not to forget either the benefit or the benefactor.

All these men had the text of the Apostle always on their lips, "If any will not work, neither let him eat;" and that of the psalmist, "Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands." These texts are perpetually appealed to in their legends, and justly, for they are an epitome of their doctrine and life.

Influence of their example upon the rural populations.

The influence of such labours and examples rapidly made itself felt upon the rustic populations who lived in the neighbourhood of this new cultivation, or who followed the solitaries into the forest to see their works, and to find in them guides and protectors. From admiration the peasants gladly passed to imitation. Often they became the voluntary coadjutors of the monks, and, without embracing monastic life, aided them to clear the ground and build their dwellings.[2] Sometimes the brigands themselves, who at first had sought their lives, or attempted to interdict them from entering the forest, ended by becoming agriculturists after their example.[3] The rapid increase of rural population in the neighbourhood of monastic establishments is

[1] "Quem fontem . . . manu sua, ut aquæ retentor esset, terrestri circumdedit ædificio, et hactenus ob amorem illius a devotis non ignobili tegitur operculo."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 9.

[2] "Circa illius eremi . . . quidam hominum rusticali opere tenuem sustentantes vitam habitabant. . . . Dei famulum sæpius invisere curabant . . . quo et ædificandi monasterii adjutores forent."—*Ibid.*, c. 26.

[3] "Multi ejusdem silvæ latrones . . . aut fiebant monachi . . . aut deserentes latrocinia efficiebantur cultores agri."—*Vita S. Ebrulfi*, c. 11.

thus explained, and also the immense amount of labour which the cenobites could undertake, the results of which exist and astonish us still.

The richest districts of France trace their prosperity to this origin: witness, amongst a thousand other places, that portion of La Brie between Meaux and Jouarre, once covered by a vast forest, the first inhabitant of which was the Irish monk Fiacre, whose name still continues popular, and whom our gardeners honour as their patron saint, probably without knowing anything whatever of his history. He had obtained from the Bishop of Meaux, who was the holder of this forest, permission to cut the wood which covered so much soil as he could surround with a ditch by one day's labour, in order to make a garden of it, and cultivate roots for poor travellers. Long after, the peasants of the environs showed this ditch, six times longer than was expected, and told how the Irish saint had taken his stick and traced a line upon the soil which sank into a ditch under the point, while the great forest trees fell right and left, as if to save him the trouble of cutting them down.[1] Thus was interpreted the profound impression produced by the labours of these monastic pioneers upon the minds of the people.

St Fiacre and his garden.

The same occurrence is attributed to St Goëznou,

[1] "Tractu baculi terra dehiscens patebat, et nemus hinc et inde funditus corruebat. . . . Fossata vero usque in hodiernum diem ab incolis demonstrantur."—MABILL. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 573.

a British emigrant, and Bishop of Leon, who, having received from a count of the country the gift "of as much land to build a monastery as he could enclose with ditches in one day, took a fork, and, trailing it along the earth, walked for nearly two hours of Brittany, forming a square; and as he trailed this fork, the earth divided one part from the other, and formed a great ditch, separating the lands given from those of the giver, which enclosure has always been held in such reverence that of old it served as an asylum and place of refuge to malefactors."[1] The ditch of St Goëznou.

In addition to these legends, born of the popular imagination and the grateful memory of ancient generations, it is pleasant to appeal to more certain witnesses by following upon our modern maps the traces of monastic labour through the forests of ancient France, and by observing a multitude of localities, the mere names of which indicate wooded districts evidently transformed into fields and plains by the monks.[2]

Is it the authentic narrative of a real incident that we should see in that chapter of the life of the Abbot Karilef, where it is said that this saint, moving with his spade the ground he dug round his cell in the forest of Perche, discovered a treasure there, over which he rejoiced ardently with his brethren, St Calais and his treasure.

[1] ALBERT LE GRAND, p. 660, after the ancient Breviary of Leon.

[2] See some valuable indications given, from the map of Cassini and a multitude of ancient and contemporary authors, by M. Alfred Maury, in chap. v. of his able and curious book, *Les Forêts de la France*.

because it gave him the means at once of helping exiles and pilgrims, and of rewarding the poor peasants who had helped to build his oratory? Or is it not rather the symbolical form in which the admiration of the people at the sight of so many works, undertaken on such feeble resources, followed by results so excellent, and elevated by a charity so generous, has found expression? It is added that the abbot and his disciples laboured with the spade because they had no means of working with the plough.[1]

But the plough was not long wanting to them anywhere. It was natural that it should be the principal instrument of monastic culture; and it may be said, without exaggeration, that it formed, along with the cross of the Redeemer, the ensign and emblazonry of the entire history of the monks during these early ages. *Cruce et aratro!* In it is summed up the life of one of the great monks of the sixth century, of whom we have yet to speak. Theodulph, born in Aquitaine, had issued from a long line of ancestors illustrious for nobility as well as for piety. Having become a monk at St Thierry, near Reims, he was specially desirous to be employed in the agricultural labours of the monas-

The Abbot Theodulph and his plough.

590.

[1] "Cum quadam die coactis fratribus . . . agriculturæ in prædio jam dicto insisteret, ac rostro terram verteret (deerat namque illis arandi copia) . . . terræ glebam sacudo detrahens, thesaurum latentem detexit. En, optimi commilitones, qualiter nostri misericordis Creatoris donis suis nostram exiguitatem nobilitat."—*Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 22. This is the last time we shall quote this narrative so complete and curious.

tery: two oxen were intrusted to him, whom he led in the plough for twenty-two years. With this yoke he did as much work as other teams accomplished with two, three, or even four of the brethren. There might be some who doubted the good sense of a man so foolish as to employ his life in such labours, and to brave all the intemperance of the seasons like a simple peasant, instead of living like his ancestors on the fruit of his subjects' labour. But all admired such a labourer, still more unwearied than his oxen; for while they rested he replaced the plough by the mattock, the harrow, or the spade; and when he returned to the monastery after days so well occupied, he was always first in the services and psalmody of the night. After these twenty-two years of ploughing he was elected abbot of his community. Then the inhabitants of the nearest village took his plough, and hung it up in their church as a relic. It was so, in fact; a noble and holy relic of one of those lives of perpetual labour and superhuman virtue, whose example has happily exercised a more fruitful and lasting influence than that of the proudest conquerors. It seems to me that we should all contemplate with emotion, if it still existed, that monk's plough, doubly sacred, by religion and by labour, by history and by virtue. For myself, I feel that I should kiss it as willingly as the sword of Charlemagne or the pen of Bossuet.

These same peasants of the neighbourhood of Reims also admired in their simplicity a great

old tree: it was said to have grown from the goad which the Abbot Theodulph used to prick on his oxen, and which he had one day stuck into the ground, when, leading them from the monastery, he paused on the roadside to mend his damaged plough.[1]

When he became abbot, Theodulph redoubled his activity in his devotion to all the duties of his charge, and to those which he imposed upon himself in addition, in building a new church in honour of St Hilary. He was specially assiduous in the services of the monastery, and exacted the same diligence from all the monks. The latter were not all animated by a zeal so impatient of repose. As both abbot and monks cherished the recollections of classic antiquity, one of the Religious once brought forward to him this verse of Horace:—

"Quod caret alterna requie durabile non est;"

to whom Theodulph answered that it was very well for pagans, too careful of their own comfort, but that as for him, he preferred that other, and equally classic text:—

[1] "Effulsit prosapia sua . . . aulicorum optimatum generositate . . . honestati majorum suorum jam uniebatur . . . religionis velut ex lineari successione. . . . Juvencos binos, cum quibus ipsi agriculturæ insudavit bis undecim annos . . . pro variis passionibus aeris et commotionibus temporum. . . . Infatigabilis cum infatigabilibus. . . . Ut cum paulum aratro indulgeret, rostro manuum insisteret. . . . Mundus ista hominis non sani capitis esse judicabat, cum his potius agricolis dominari ille ex progenitorum usu debuisset. . . . Inter cœnobium et villam Melfigiam . . . stimulo spineo terræ infixo . . . agricola sanctus aratri correctione opportune incubuit."—BOLLAND., t. i. *Maii*, p. 97.

'Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus."[1]

Labour and prayer formed the double sphere in which the existence of the monastic colonisers always flowed, and the double end of their long and unwearied efforts. But they certainly did not think it sufficient to initiate the rustic population of Frankish Gaul in the laborious habits and best processes of agriculture. They had still more at heart the cultivation of so many souls infinitely precious in the eyes of God and of the servants of God. By their example and exhortations, by their vigilant charity, and at the same time by their oral instruction, they dug in those rude hearts the deep furrows where they sowed abundantly the seeds of virtue and eternal life. To their example, and above all to their influence, the beneficent solicitude of the provincial Councils of Gaul for the spiritual instruction of the rural population must be attributed. "The priests," says the Council of Rouen, "must warn their parishioners that they ought to permit or cause their neatherds, swineherds, and other herdsmen, their ploughmen, and those who are continually in the fields or woods, and live there like the animals, to attend mass, on Sundays and holidays at least. Those who neglect this shall have to answer for their souls, and shall

Solicitude of the monks for the spiritual necessities of the peasants.

Council of Rouen. 650.

[1] "Erat namque quietis impatiens . . . duplicabat cursum laboris sui et officii. . . . Illius notissimi auctoris dictum . . . sibi parcentium ethnicorum remissioni."—BOLLAND., t. i. *Mart*, p. 97.

have to render a severe account. For the Lord when he came upon the earth did not choose orators or nobles for his disciples, but fishers and men of the humblest class; and it was not to high intelligences, but to the poor shepherds, that the angel announced in the first place the nativity of our Lord."[1]

But how could they have supplied the spiritual necessities of all that population of shepherds and labourers, not numerous, and spread over immense regions not more than half inhabited, if the monks had not come to second and succeed the secular clergy, establishing among them at a thousand different points, and precisely in the quarters least accessible, their cells and oratories? These oratories in time became churches; the cottages of the peasants gathered round them; the latter were henceforth sure of sharing in all the benefits of spiritual paternity, conferred upon them by men often issuing from the noblest and most powerful races among the masters and conquerors of the country, who voluntarily shared their fatigues and

[1] "Admonere debent sacerdotes plebes subditas sibi ut *bubulcos* atque *porcarios*, vel alios *pastores*, vel *aratores*, qui *in agris assidue commorantur, vel in silvis*, et *ideo velut more pecudum vivunt*, in dominicis et in aliis festis diebus saltem vel ad missam faciant vel permittant venire: nam et hos Christus pretioso suo sanguine redemit. Quod si neglexerint, pro animabus eorum absque dubio rationem se reddituros sciant. Siquidem Dominus veniens in hunc mundum non elegit oratores atque nobiliores quosque, sed piscatores atque idiotas sibi discipulos ascivit. . . . Et salva altiore intelligentia, nativitas nostri Redemptoris primo omnium pastoribus ab angelo nunciatur."—COLETTI *Concilia*, t. vii. p. 406.

privations, who led a life as hard as, and even harder than, theirs, and who asked of them, in exchange for such services and examples, only that they should join them in praising the Lord.

Our solitaries, thus becoming, often against their will, the fathers and leaders of a numerous progeny, saw themselves surrounded by a double family, that of their disciples and that of their dependents, the monastic and the rustic community, both united by faith, labour, and common prayer. From the midst of forests so long unapproachable, and deserts henceforward repeopled, arose everywhere the hymn of joy, gratitude, and adoration. The prophecy of Isaiah was verified under their very eyes for them and by them:—"Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."[1]

The forest canticle.

And are not we tempted sometimes to give ear and listen whether some faint echo of that delightful harmony does not float across the ocean of time? Certainly earth has never raised to heaven a sweeter concert than that of so many pure and pious voices full of faith and enthusiasm, rising from the glades

[1] Isaiah, lv. 12, 13.

of the ancient forests, from the sides of rocks, and from the banks of waterfalls or torrents, to celebrate their new-born happiness, like the birds under the leaves, or like our dear little children in their charming lispings, when they greet with joyful and innocent confidence the dawn of a day in which they foresee neither storms nor decline.

The Church has known days more resplendent and more solemn, days better calculated to raise the admiration of sages, the fervour of pious souls, and the unshaken confidence of her children; but I know not if she has ever breathed forth a charm more touching and pure than in the spring-time of monastic life.

In that Gaul which had borne for five centuries the ignominious yoke of the Cæsars, which had groaned under Barbarian invasions, and where everything still breathed blood, fire, and carnage, Christian virtue, watered by the spirit of penitence and sacrifice, began to bud everywhere. Everywhere faith seemed to blossom like flowers after the winter; everywhere moral life revived and budded like the verdure of the woods; everywhere under the ancient arches of the Druïdical forests was celebrated the fresh betrothal of the Church with the Frankish people.

BOOK VII.

ST COLUMBANUS.—THE IRISH IN GAUL AND THE COLONIES OF LUXEUIL.

SUMMARY.

Ireland, converted by two slaves, becomes Christian without having been Roman.—LEGEND OF ST PATRICK: the bards and the slaves; St Bridget; the light of Kildare.—The Irish monasteries: Bangor: St Luan.—The Irish missionaries.—BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF ST COLUMBANUS; his mission in Gaul; his sojourn at Annegray: the wolves and the Sueve brigands.—He settles at Luxeuil; state of Sequania: great influx of disciples; *Laus perennis*.—Episcopal opposition: haughty letter of Columbanus to a council.—HIS STRUGGLE WITH BRUNEHAULT AND THIERRY II.: St Martin of Autun founded by Brunehault: first expulsion of Columbanus; the young Agilus; Columbanus at Besançon; return to Luxeuil.—He is again expelled: his voyage on the Loire; arrival at Nantes; letter to the monks at Luxeuil.—He goes to Clotaire II., King of Neustria, and to Theodebert II., King of Austrasia.—His mission to the Alamans; St Gall; the dialogue of the demons on the lake.—He abandons the conversion of the Sclaves, and returns to Theodebert; defeat and death of this king.—Columbanus crosses the Alps and passes into Lombardy.—He founds Bobbio; his poems; his remonstrances with Pope Boniface IV.—Clotaire II. recalls him to Gaul: he refuses and dies.—He was neither the enemy of kings nor of popes.—RULE OF COLUMBANUS: the *Penitential*.

DISCIPLES OF COLUMBANUS in Italy and Helvetia.—His successors at Bobbio; Attalus and Bertulph; the Arian Ariowald and the monk Blidulf.—Abbey of Dissentis in Rhetia: St Sigisbert.—St Gall separates from Columbanus; origin of the abbey called by his name; the demons again.—Princess Frideburga and her betrothed.—Gall is reconciled to Columbanus and dies.

INFLUENCE, PREPONDERANCE, AND PROSPERITY OF LUXEUIL under St Eustace, first successor of Columbanus.—Luxeuil becomes the monastic capital of Gaul and the first school of Christianity: bishops and saints issue from Luxeuil: Hermenfried of Verdun.—Schism of Agrestin subdued at the Council of Mâcon; the Irish tonsure; Note on Bishop Faron and his wife.—The Benedictine rule adopted in conjunction with the institution of Luxeuil.—The double consulate.—St Walbert, third abbot of Luxeuil.—Exemption accorded by Pope John IV.

COLONIES OF LUXEUIL in the two Burgundies: St Desle at Lure and Clotaire II.—The ducal family of St Donatus: Romainmoutier re-established; the nuns of Jussamoutier; Beze; Bregille.—The abbot Hermenfried at Cusance: he kisses the hands of the husbandmen.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Rauracia: St Ursanne; St Germain of Grandval, first martyr of the Columbanic institution.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Neustria: St Wandregisil at Fontenelle: he converted the country of Caux: St Philibert at Jumiéges; commerce and navigation; death of four hundred and fifty saints of Jumiéges.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Brie and Champagne: St Ouen and his brothers; Jouarre.—St Agilus at Rebais; hospitality; vision of the poor traveller.—Burgundofara braves martyrdom to be made a nun, and when abbess, repels the schismatic Agrestin.—Her brother St Faron and King Clotaire II. hunting.—St Fiacre, St Fursy, St Frobert at Moutier-la-Celle, St Berchaire at Hautvillers and Montier-en-Der.—St Salaberga at Laon.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Ponthieu: the shepherd Valery, gardener at Luxeuil, founder of Leuconäus.—Popular opposition.—St Riquier at Centule.

Colonies of Luxeuil among the Morins: St Omer and St Bertin at Sithiu; change of the name of monasteries.

THE SAINTS OF REMIREMONT: Amatus and Romaric; the double monasteries; Agrestin at Remiremont; Romaric and the prime minister Grimoald.—St Eloysius and Solignac.

Why was the rule of St Columbanus rejected and replaced by that of St Benedict? The Council of Autun acknowledges only the latter. The Council of Rome in 610 confirmed it. It was identified with the authority of the Holy See, and thus succeeded in governing all.

BOOK VII.

ST COLUMBANUS.

Ad has nostras Gallicanas partes S. Columbanus ascendens, Luxoviense construxit monasterium, factus ibi in gentem magnam.—S. BERNARDI, *Vita S. Malach.*, c. 5

Si tollis libertatem, tollis et dignitatem.—S. COLUMBANI, *Epist. ad Fratres.*

WHILE the missionaries of Monte Cassino planted slowly and obscurely in the new kingdom of the Franks that Order, the observance of which St Gregory the Great, by his example and by his disciples, regulated and extended everywhere, a man had appeared in the Church and in Gaul as the type of a distinct race and spirit. A monk and monastic legislator, like St Benedict, he at one moment threatened to eclipse and replace the Benedictine institution in the Catholic world. This was St Columbanus. 590-603.

He came from the north, as St Maur had come from the south. He was born in Ireland: he brought with him a colony of Irish monks; and his name leads us back to consider that race and country of which he has been the most illustrious representative among us.

Ireland, that virgin island on which proconsul never set foot, which never knew either the orgies

Ireland became Christian without having been Roman.

or the exactions of Rome, was also the only place in the world of which the Gospel took possession without bloodshed. It is thus spoken of by Ozanam;[1] and certainly no one has described it better, though allowance must be made for the excessive admiration which disposes him to exalt above measure the part played by the Irish from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, attributing to them exclusively that impulse of diffusion and expansion, and that thirst for instructing and converting, which characterised the entire Church and monastic order during that long and glorious period. The preponderance of the Irish race in the work of preaching and in the conversion of pagan or semi-Christian nations was only temporary, and did not last longer than the seventh century; but their exertions at that time were so undeniable as to leave France, Switzerland, and Belgium under a debt of everlasting gratitude. This branch of the great family of Celtic nations, known under the name of *Hibernians, Scots,* or *Gaels,* and whose descendants and language have survived to our own days in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, in Wales, and in Lower Brittany, had adopted the faith of Christ with enthusiasm; and, at the moment when Celtic vitality seemed about to perish in Gaul and Great Britain, under the double pressure of Roman decay and Germanic invasion, appeared among all the Christian races as the one most de-

[1] *Etudes Germaniques*, t. ii. p. 99.

voted to the Catholic faith, and most zealous for the spread of the Gospel.[1] From the moment that this *Green Erin*, situated at the extremity of the known world, had seen the sun of faith rise upon her, she had vowed herself to it with an ardent and tender devotion which became her very life. The course of ages has not interrupted this; the most bloody and implacable of persecutions has not shaken it; the defection of all northern Europe has not led her astray; and she maintains still, amid the splendours and miseries of modern civilisation and Anglo-Saxon supremacy, an inextinguishable centre of faith, where survives, along with the completest orthodoxy, that admirable purity of manners which no conqueror and no adversary has ever been able to dispute, to equal, or to diminish.

The ecclesiastical antiquity and hagiography of Ireland constitute in themselves an entire world of inquiry. We shall be pardoned for not desiring to enter into their interminable and somewhat confused perspectives.[2] It will suffice us to detach from this mass of legendary narratives, which modern erudition has not yet been able to clear away, as much as is indispensable to our subject, and will prove the development of the monastic principle, contem-

[1] "Scottorum gens . . . absque reliquarum gentium legibus, tamen in Christiani vigoris dogmate florens, omnium vicinarum gentium fide præpollet."—JONAS, *Vita S. Columb.*, c. 6, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B. *sæc. II.*

[2] LANIGAN, *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland from the First Introduction of Christianity to the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century*, (Dublin, 1829, 4 vols.), may be consulted with advantage, though without coinciding in its views.

poraneous with, but entirely independent of the diffusion of cenobitical institutions in all the Roman empire and through all the Barbarian races.

Two slaves brought the faith to Ireland, and at the same time founded monastic life there. Such is at least the popular belief, confirmed by the most credible narratives.

Conversion of Ireland by St Patrick. 387-465.

The Gallo-Roman Patrick, son of a relative of the great St Martin of Tours, had been seized at sixteen by pirates, and sold as a slave into Ireland, where he kept the flocks of his master, and where hunger, cold, nakedness, and the pitiless severity of this master, initiated him into all the horrors of slavery. Restored to liberty after six years of servitude, and returned to Gaul, he saw always in his dreams the children of the poor Irish pagans whose yoke he had known, holding out to him their little arms. His sleep and his studies were equally disturbed by these visions. It seemed to him that he heard the voice of these innocents asking baptism of him, and crying—"Dear Christian child, return among us! return to save us!"[1] After having studied in the great monastic sanctuaries of Marmoutier and Lerins, after having accompanied St Germain of Auxerre in the mission undertaken by that great champion of orthodoxy to root out the Pelagian heresy so dear to the Celtic races from Great Bri-

[1] "Vidi in visu de nocte . . . Putabam . . . audire vocem ipsorum . . . Rogamus te, sancte puer, venias et adhuc ambules inter nos. Et valde compunctus sum corde, et amplius non potui legere, et sic expergefactus sum."—ACT. SS. BOLLAND., t. ii. *Mart.*, p. 535.

tain, he went to Rome, obtained there a mission from the Pope St Celestin, and returned to Ireland as a bishop to preach the faith. The kings, the chiefs, the warlike and impressionable people of Green Erin listened to him, followed him, and testified towards him that impassioned veneration which has become the most popular tradition of the Irish, and which thirteen centuries have not lessened. After thirty-three years of apostleship he died, leaving Ireland almost entirely converted, and, moreover, filled with schools and communities destined to become a nursery of missionaries for the West.

Legend and history have vied in taking possession of the life of St Patrick.

Patrick and Ossian.

There is nothing in his legend more poetic than the meeting between the Gallo-Roman apostle and the Irish bards, who formed a hereditary and sacerdotal class. Among them he found his most faithful disciples. Ossian himself, the blind Homer of Ireland, allowed himself to be converted by him, and Patrick listened in his turn as he sang the long epic of Celtic kings and heroes.[1] Harmony was not established between these two without being preceded by some storms. Patrick threatened with hell the profane warriors whose glory Ossian vaunted, and the bard replied to the apostle, "If thy God was in hell, my heroes would draw him from it." But triumphant truth made peace between poetry and faith. The monasteries

[1] Ozanam, ii. 472.

founded by Patrick became the asylum and centre of Celtic poetry. When once blessed and transformed, says an old author, the songs of the bards became so sweet that the angels of God leant down from heaven to listen to them ;[1] and this explains the reason why the harp of the bards has continued the symbol and emblazonry of Catholic Ireland.

Nothing is better established in the history of St Patrick, than his zeal to preserve the country where he had himself borne the yoke, from the abuses of slavery, and especially from the incursions of the pirates, Britons and Scots, robbers and traffickers in men, who made it a sort of store from which they took their human cattle. The most authentic memorial of the saint which remains to us is his eloquent protest against the king of a British horde, who, landing in the midst of a tribe baptised the evening before, massacred several, and carried off the others to sell them. "Patrick, an ignorant sinner, but constituted bishop in Hibernia, and dwelling among the barbarous nations, because of my love for God, I write these letters with my own hand to be transmitted to the soldiers of the tyrant, I say not to my fellow-citizens, nor to the fellow-citizens of the saints of Rome, but to the compatriots of the devil, to the apostate Scots and Picts who live in death, and fatten themselves with the blood of the innocent Christians with whom I have travailed for my

[1] La Villemarqué, *Légende Celtique*, p. 109.

God. . . . Does not the divine mercy which I love oblige me to act thus, to defend even those who of old made myself captive and massacred the slaves and servants of my father?"[1] Elsewhere he praises the courage of the enslaved girls whom he had converted, and who defended their modesty and faith heroically, against their unworthy masters.[2]

Men and women were treated then among all the Celtic nations as they were during the last century on the coasts of Africa. Slavery, and the trade in slaves, was still more difficult to root out among them than paganism.[3] And yet the Christian faith dawned upon Ireland by means of two slaves! The name of Patrick is associated by an undying link with that of Bridget, the daughter, according to the legend, of a bard and a beautiful captive, whom her master had sent away, like Hagar, at the suggestion of his wife. Born in grief and shame, she was received and baptised, along with her mother, by the disciples of St Patrick. In vain would her father have taken her back and bestowed her in marriage when her beauty and

St Bridget. 467-525.

[1] "Inter barbaras gentes proselytus et perfuga, ob amorem Dei. . . . Non dico civibus meis atque civibus sanctorum Romanorum, sed civibus dæmonorum. . . . Socii Scotorum atque Pictorum apostatarum. . . . Illam gentem quæ me aliquando cœpit, et devastavit servos et ancillas patris mei."—*Epistola S. P. ad Christianos Coqrolici Tyranni subditos*, ap. BOLLAND., d. 17 *Mart.*, p. 538.

[2] "Sed et illæ maxime laborant, quæ servitio detinentur, usque ad terrores et minas assidue perferunt."—*Confessio* S. PATRICII *de Vita et Conversatione sua*, ap. BOLL., p. 536.

[3] The slave trade was in full activity in the tenth century between England and Ireland, and the port of Bristol was its principal centre.

wisdom became apparent. She devoted herself to God and the poor, and went to live in an oak-wood formerly consecrated to the false gods. The miraculous cures she wrought attracted the crowd, and she soon founded the first female monastery which Ireland had known, under the name of Kildare, *the Cell of the Oak.* She died there at seventy, after an entire life of love and labour. Upon her tomb immediately rose the inextinguishable flame called *the Light of St Bridget,*[1] which her nuns kept always burning, which the faith and love of an unfortunate people watched over for a thousand years as the signal-light of the country, until the triumph of a sacrilegious reform, and which in our own days has been relighted by the muse of a patriot poet.[2] Innumerable convents of women trace their origin to the Abbess of Kildare: wherever the Irish monks have penetrated, from Cologne to Seville, churches have been raised in her honour; and wherever, in our own time, British emigration spreads, the name of Bridget points out the woman

[1] "Apud Kildariam occurret *ignis sanctæ Brigidæ*, quem inextinguibilem vocant; non quod extingui non posset, sed quod tam sollicite moniales et sanctæ mulieres ignem, suppetente materia, fovent et nutriunt, ut tempore virginis per tot annorum curricula semper mansit inextinctus."—GIRALD. CAMB., *De Mirabil. Hibern.*, Disq. 2, c. 34.

[2] "Like the bright lamp that shone in Kildare's holy fane,
And burned through long ages of darkness and storm,
Is the heart that afflictions have come o'er in vain,
Whose spirit outlives them, unfading and warm!
Erin! oh Erin! thus bright through the tears
Of a long night of bondage thy spirit appears."
MOORE, *Irish Melodies.*

of Irish race.[1] Deprived by persecution and poverty of the means of erecting monuments of stone, they testify their unshaken devotion to that dear memory by giving her name to their daughters — a noble and touching homage made by a race, always unfortunate and always faithful, to a saint who was like itself, a slave, and like itself, a Catholic. There are glories more noisy and splendid, but are there many which do more honour to human nature?[2]

The productiveness of the monastic germ planted by Patrick and Bridget was prodigious. In his own lifetime, the apostle of Ireland was astonished to find that he could no longer number the sons and daughters of chieftains who had embraced cloistral life at his bidding.[3] The rude and simple architecture of these primitive monasteries has left a visible trace in the celebrated *round towers*, spread over the soil of Ireland, which had so long exercised the ingenuity of archæologists, until contemporary

The Irish monasteries.

[1] *Bridget* or *Bride*. There are still eighteen parishes in Ireland which bear the name of *Kilbride*, or the church of Bridget.

[2] At the time of the invasion of the Danes, who burned Kildare in 835, the shrine of St Bridget was removed to the monastery of Downpatrick, where the body of St Patrick reposed. In 850 the relics of St Columb-kill were for a like reason brought from the island of Iona to the same shelter. Thus the three great saints of the Celtic race are to be found assembled in the same tomb. Their solemn translation was celebrated, in 1186, by a legate of Pope Urban III.

[4] "Filii Scotorum et filiæ regulorum monachi et virgines Christi esse videntur . . . nescimus numerum eorum."—*Confessio*, loc. cit. Mabillon thinks that St Patrick gave the rule of Marmoutier to his newly-born communities.—*Præf. in I. sæc. Bened.*, cap. i. n. 25. Compare HÆFTEN, *Disquisitiones Monasticæ*, p. 57, Antwerpia, 1644, folio. Lanigan believes that there were monks in Ireland even before St Patrick.

science demonstrated that these monuments were nothing else than the belfries of cathedrals and abbeys erected between the time of the conversion of the island and its conquest by the English.[1] Among so many saints who were the successors and emulators of St Patrick, we shall name only one, Luan, whose memory St Bernard consecrated six centuries afterwards, by affirming that he had himself founded in his own person a hundred monasteries.[2] This Luan was a little shepherd who had been educated by the monks of the immense abbey of Bangor. For shortly the monasteries at Bangor, Clonfert, and elsewhere, became entire towns, each of which enclosed more than three thousand cenobites. The Thebaid reappeared in Ireland, and the West had no longer anything to envy in the history of the East.

Intellectual culture in the monasteries.

There was besides an intellectual development, which the Eremites of Egypt had not known. The Irish communities, joined by the monks from Gaul and Rome, whom the example of Patrick had drawn upon his steps,[3] entered into rivalry with the great monastic schools of Gaul. They explained Ovid there; they copied Virgil; they devoted themselves especially to Greek literature; they drew back from no inquiry, from no discussion; they gloried in placing boldness on a level with

[1] Essay of Mr Petrie, presented to the Royal Academy of Ireland in 1836.

[2] S. Bernard., *in Vita S. Malachiæ*, c. 6.

[3] In 536, fifty monks from the Continent landed at Cork.

faith. The young Luan answered the Abbot of Bangor, who warned him against the dangers of too engrossing a study of the liberal arts: "If I have the knowledge of God, I shall never offend God; for they who disobey him are they who know him not." Upon which the abbot left him, saying, "My son, thou art firm in the faith, and true knowledge will put thee in the right road for heaven."[1]

The Irish missionaries.

A characteristic still more distinctive of the Irish monks, as of all their nation, was the imperious necessity of spreading themselves without, of seeking or carrying knowledge and faith afar, and of penetrating into the most distant regions to watch or combat paganism. This monastic nation, therefore, became the missionary nation *par excellence*. While some came to Ireland to procure religious instruction, the Irish missionaries launched forth from their island. They covered the land and seas of the West. Unwearied navigators, they landed on the most desert islands; they overflowed the Continent with their successive immigrations.[2] They saw in incessant visions a world known and unknown to be conquered for Christ. The poem of the *Pilgrimage of St Brandan*, that monkish

[1] See OZANAM, op. cit., ii. 97, 101, 472, and the curious verses which he quotes:—

"Benchior bona regula
Rocta atque divina . . .
Navis nunquam turbata . . .
Simplex simul atque docta
Undecumque invicta . . ."

[2] "In exteras etiam nationes, quasi inundatione facta illa se sanctorum examina effuderunt."—S. BERNARDI, *Vita S. Malach.*, c. 5.

Odyssey so celebrated in the middle ages, that popular prelude of the *Divina Commedia*, shows us the Irish monks in close contact with all the dreams and wonders of the Celtic ideal. Hereafter we shall see them struggling against the reality; we shall speak of their metropolis upon the rock of Iona, in the Hebrides; we shall tell what they did for the conversion of Great Britain. But we must follow them first into Gaul, that country from which the Gospel had been carried to them by Patrick. Several had already reached Armorica with that invasion of Celtic refugees which we have described in the preceding Book. But it was only in the end of the sixth century that the action of Ireland upon the countries directly subjected to Frank dominion became decisive. She thus generously repaid her debt to Gaul. She had received Patrick from Gaul; in return, she sent Columbanus.

Birth of St Columbanus.

The rival of St Benedict was born the same year in which the patriarch of Monte Cassino died. Instructed from his infancy in literature and the liberal arts, he had also to struggle early with the temptations of the flesh. His beauty, which attracted all eyes, exposed him, says the monk who has written his life,[1] to the shameless temptations

[1] *Vita S. Columbani Abbatis, Auctore* JONA, *Monacho Bobiensi Fere Æquali*, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. This Jonas was of Susa, in Piedmont. He wrote by order of Attala and Eustace, successors of Columbanus. He quotes Titus Livius and Virgil by the side of the Holy Scriptures. His book is one of the most curious monuments of the Merovingian period.

of the beautiful Irishwomen. It was in vain that he plunged into the study of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and Holy Scripture. The goad of voluptuousness pricked him perpetually. He went to the cell inhabited by a pious recluse to consult her. "Twelve years ago," she answered him, "I myself left my own house to enter into a war against sin. Inflamed by the fires of youth, thou shalt attempt in vain to escape from thy frailty while thou remainest upon thy native soil. Hast thou forgotten Adam, Samson, David, and Solomon, all lost by the seductions of beauty and love? Young man, to save thyself, thou must flee."[1] He listened, believed her, and decided on going away. His mother attempted to deter him, prostrating herself before him upon the threshold of the door; he crossed that dear obstacle, left the province of Leinster, where he was born, and, after spending some time with a learned doctor, who made him compose a commentary on the Psalms, he found refuge at Bangor, among the many monks still imbued with the primitive fervour which had assembled them there under the cross of the holy abbot Comgall.

But this first apprenticeship of the holy war was not enough. The adventurous temper of his race,

[1] "Liberalium litterarum doctrinis et grammaticorum studiis. . . . Cum eum formæ elegantia . . . omnibus gratum redderet. . . . Lascivarum puellarum in eum suscitavit amores, præcipue quas forma corporis. . . . Perge, o juvenis! perge, evita ruinam."—JONAS, c. 7, 8.

the passion for pilgrimage and preaching,[1] drew him beyond the seas. He heard incessantly the voice which had spoken to Abraham echoing in his ears, "Go out of thine own country, and from thy father's house, into the land which I shall show thee." That land was ours. The abbot attempted in vain to retain him. Columbanus, then thirty, left Bangor with twelve other monks, crossed Great Britain, and reached Gaul. He found the Catholic faith in existence there, but Christian virtue and ecclesiastical discipline unknown or outraged—thanks to the fury of the wars and the negligence of the bishops. He devoted himself during several years to traversing the country, preaching the Gospel, and especially to giving an example of the humility and charity which he taught to all. Arriving in the course of his apostolical wanderings in Burgundy, he was received there by King Gontran, of all the grandsons of Clovis the one whose life appears to have been least blamable, and who had most sympathy for the monks. His eloquence delighted the king and his lords. Fearing that he would leave them, Gontran offered him whatever he chose if he would remain; and as the Irishman answered that he had not left his own country to seek wealth, but to follow Christ and bear his cross, the king persisted, and told him that

His mission to the Gauls.

[1] "Scottorum quibus consuetudo peregrinandi jam pene in naturam conversa est."—WALARIDUS STRABO, *De Mirac. S. Galli*, lib. ii. c. 47. "Qui tironem suum ad futura bella erudierat."—JONAS, c. 9.

there were in his kingdoms many savage and solitary places where he might find the cross and win heaven, but that he must on no account leave Gaul, nor dream of converting other nations, till he had assured the salvation of the Franks and Burgundians.[1]

His residence at Annegray.

Columbanus yielded to his desire, and chose for his dwelling-place the ancient Roman castle of Annegray.[2] He led the simplest life there with his companions. He lived for entire weeks without any other food than the grass of the fields, the bark of the trees, and the bilberries which are to be found in our fir-woods; he received other provisions only from the charity of the neighbours. Often he separated himself from his disciples to plunge alone into the woods, and live in common with the animals. There, as afterwards, in his long and close communion with the bare and savage nature of these desert places, nothing alarmed him, nor did he cause fear to any creature. Everything obeyed his voice. The birds, as has been already mentioned, came to receive his caresses, and the squirrels descended from the tree-tops to hide

[1] "Ob negligentiam præsulum, religionis virtus pene abolita. . . . Gratus regi et aulicis ob egregiam doctrinæ copiam. . . . Ut intra terminos Galliarum resideret. . . . Tantum ne solo nostræ ditionis relicto, ad vicinas transeas nationes . . . ut nostræ saluti provideas."—JONAS, c. 11, 12. Compare WALAF. STRABON., lib. i. c. 2. I refer to the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, t. ii., and to vol. vii. of October by the new Bollandists, p. 868, for the divers dates assigned to the journey and sojourn of Columbanus in France.

[2] Now a hamlet of the commune of Faucogney (Haute-Saône).

themselves in the folds of his cowl. He expelled a bear from the cavern which became his cell; he took from another bear a dead stag, whose skin served to make shoes for his brethren. One day, while he wandered in the depths of the wood, bearing a volume of Holy Scripture on his shoulder, and meditating whether the ferocity of the beasts, who could not sin, was not better than the rage of men, which destroyed their souls, he saw a dozen wolves approach and surround him on both sides. He remained motionless, repeating these words, "Deus in adjutorium." The wolves, after having touched his garments with their mouths, seeing him without fear, passed upon their way. He pursued his, and a few steps farther on heard a noise of human voices, which he recognised as those of a band of German brigands, of the Sueve nation, who then wasted that country. He did not see them; but he thanked God for having preserved him from this double danger, in which may be seen a double symbol of the constant struggle which the monks had to maintain in their laborious warfare against the wild forces of nature, and the still more savage barbarity of men.[1]

The wolves and brigands.

[1] "Novem dies jam transierant, quo vir Dei cum suis non alias dapes caperet quam arborum cortices herbasque saltus . . . vel parvulorum pomorum quæ Bollucas vulgo appellant. . . . Chamnoaldo Lugduno clavato pontifice, qui ejus et minister et discipulus fuit, cognovimus referente, qui se testabatur sæpe vidisse . . . bestias ac aves accersere . . . ferusculam, quam vulgo homines Squirium vocant. . . . Abiit fera mitis nec prorsus est ausa redire. . . . Contra naturam absque murmure . . . cadaver reliquit. . . . Conspicit duodecim lupos advenire . . . ora

At the end of some years, the increasing number of his disciples obliged him to seek another residence, and by the help of one of the principal ministers of the Frank king, Agnoald, whose wife was a Burgundian of very high family,[1] he obtained from Gontran the site of another strong castle, named Luxeuil, where there had been Roman baths, magnificently ornamented, and where the idols formerly worshipped by the Gauls were still found in the neighbouring forests. Upon the ruins of these two civilisations the great monastic metropolis of Austrasia and Burgundy was to be planted.

He settles at Luxeuil. 590.

Luxeuil was situated upon the confines of these two kingdoms, at the foot of the Vosges, and north of that Sequania, the southern part of which had already been for more than a century lighted up by the abbey of Condat. The district which extends over the sides of the Vosges and Jura, since so illustrious and prosperous under the name of Franche-Comté, then consisted, for a range of sixty leagues, and a breadth of ten or fifteen, of nothing but parallel chains of inaccessible defiles, divided by impenetrable forests, and bristling with immense pine-woods, which descended from the heights of the

Condition of Sequania.

vestimenti ejus jungunt . . . . interritum relinquunt. . . . Vocem Suevorum multorum per avia aberrantium."—JONAS, c. 14-16, 26, 30.

[1] "Regis conviva et consiliarius. . . . Conjux ex præclara Burgundiorum prosapia. Quanquam ejus industria universa palatii officia gererentur, nec non totius regni querimoniæ illius æquissima definitione terminarentur."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 1, 3, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii.

highest mountains to overshadow the course of the rapid and pure streams of the Doubs, Dessoubre, and Loue. The Barbarian invasions, and especially that of Attila, had reduced the Roman towns into ashes, and annihilated all agriculture and population. The forest and the wild beasts had taken possession of that solitude which it was reserved for the disciples of Columbanus and Benedict to transform into fields and pastures.[1]

Increase of disciples round St Columbanus.

Disciples collected abundantly round the Irish coloniser. He could soon count several hundreds of them in the three monasteries which he had built in succession, and which he himself governed.[2] The noble Franks and Burgundians, overawed by the sight of these great creations of work and prayer, brought their sons to him, lavished gifts upon him, and often came to ask him to cut their long hair, the sign of nobility and freedom, and admit them into the ranks of his army.[3] Labour and prayer attained here, under the strong arm of Columbanus, to proportions up to that time unheard of. The multitude of

[1] "Erat tunc vasta eremus Vosagus nomine . . . aspera vastitate solitudinis et scopulorum interpositione loca aspera."—JONAS, c. 12. See the excellent description of Jura and its monastic agriculture, in the *Histoire des Grandes Forêts de la Gaule*, by M. ALFRED MAURY, p. 181.

[2] Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaines. The biographer of St Valery gives the number two hundred and twenty; other authors say six hundred.

[3] "Ibi nobilium liberi undique concurrere nitebantur."—JONAS, c. 17. "Multi non solum de genere Burgundionum, sed etiam Francorum . . . confluxerunt . . . ut omnia sua ad ipsum locum contraderent, et coma capitis deposita."—WALAFR. STRABO, c. 2.

poor serfs and rich lords became so great that he could organise that perpetual service, called *Laus perennis*, which already existed at Agaune, on the other side of the Jura and Lake Leman, where, night and day, the voices of the monks, "unwearied as those of angels," arose to celebrate the praises of God in an unending song.[1] *Laus perennis.*

Rich and poor were equally bound to the agricultural labours, which Columbanus himself directed. In the narrative of the wonders which mingle with every page of his life, they are all to be seen employed successively in ploughing, in mowing, in reaping, and in cutting wood. With the impetuosity natural to him, he made no allowance for any weakness. He required even the sick to thrash the wheat. An article of his rule ordained the monk to go to rest so fatigued that he should fall asleep on the way, and to get up before he had slept sufficiently. It is at the cost of this excessive and perpetual labour that the half of our own country

[1] S. BERNARD., *in Vita S. Malach.*, c. 6. Compare MABILL., *Annal.*, lib. viii. n. 10. 16; D. PITRA, *Hist. de S. Leger*, p. 301; the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, t. ii. p. 25 and 478. This perpetual service, called *Laus perennis*, was long maintained at St Maurice, at Remiremont, at St Denis, and elsewhere. There are also traces of its existence in the first monasteries of Egypt and Palestine. In the Life of St Mary the Egyptian, in speaking of a monastery near Jordan, are the following words: "Psallentia ibi erat, incessabiles totius noctis habens stabilitates . . . . et in ore psalmi divini absque diminutione."—ROSWEYDE, *Vitæ Patrum*, p. 383. Alexander, a Syrian monk, who died about 430, founded a special order of monks called *Acémètes*, or people who do not sleep. He ruled, first on the shores of the Euphrates, and afterwards at Constantinople, three hundred recluses, divided into six choirs, who relieved each other in singing night and day.

and of ungrateful Europe has been restored to cultivation and life.[1]

Displeasure of the bishops.

Twenty years passed thus, during which the reputation of Columbanus increased and extended afar. But his influence was not undisputed. He displeased one portion of the Gallo-Frank clergy, in the first place, by the Irish peculiarities of his costume and tonsure, perhaps also by the intemperate zeal with which he attempted, in his epistles, to remind the bishops of their duties, and certainly by his obstinate perseverance in celebrating Easter according to Irish usage, on the fourteenth day of the moon, when that day happened on a Sunday, instead of celebrating it, with all the rest of the Church, on the Sunday after the fourteenth day. This peculiarity, at once trifling and oppressive, disturbed his whole life, and weakened his authority; for his pertinacity on this point reached so far, that he actually attempted more than once to bring the Holy See itself to his side.[2]

The details of his struggle with the bishops of Gaul remain unknown; but the resolution he displayed may be understood, by some passages of his

[1] "Imperat ut omnes surgant atque messem in area virga cædant. . . . Cum vidisset eos magno labore glebas scindere."—JONAS, c. 20, 23, 28. "Lassus ad stratum veniat, ambulansque dormitet, necdum expleto somno surgere compellatur."—*Reg.* S. COLUMBANI, c. 9.

[2] He wrote several letters on this subject to St Gregory the Great, of which there is no trace in the correspondence of this pope, and only one of them has been preserved in the works of Columbanus. In the latter, he says that Satan hindered his three former letters from coming to the hands of Gregory.

letter to the synod or council which met to examine this question. The singular mixture of humility and pride, and the manly and original eloquence with which this epistle is stamped, does not conceal what was strange and irregular in the part which he arrogated to himself in the Church. Though he calls himself *Columbanus the sinner*, it is very apparent that he felt himself the guide and instructor of those to whom he spoke.

His letter to a council.

He begins by thanking God that, owing to His grace, so many holy bishops now assemble to consider the interests of faith and morality. He exhorts them to assemble more frequently, despite the dangers and difficulties which they might meet on the road, and wishes them to occupy themselves, under the presidence of Jesus Christ, not only with the question of Easter, but with other canonical observances cruelly neglected. He prides himself on his own trials, and what he calls the persecution of which he has been the victim. He blames the diversity of customs and variety of traditions in the Church, condemning himself thus by his own mouth, and not perceiving the wisdom of ecclesiastical authority, which seems to have long tolerated, in himself and his compatriots, the individual and local observance which he would fain have inflicted as a yoke upon all Christendom. He also advocates union between the secular and regular clergy; and his language then becomes more touching and solemn. "I am not the author

of this difference: I have come into these parts, a poor stranger, for the cause of the Christ.Saviour, our common God and Lord; I ask of your holinesses but a single grace: that you will permit me to live in silence in the depth of these forests, near the bones of seventeen brethren whom I have already seen die: I shall pray for you with those who remain to me, as I ought, and as I have always done for twelve years. Ah! let us live with you in this Gaul where we now are, since we are destined to live with each other in heaven, if we are found worthy to enter there. Despite our lukewarmness, we will follow, the best we can, the doctrines and precepts of our Lord and the apostles. These are our weapons, our shield, and our glory. To remain faithful to them we have left our country, and are come among you. It is yours, holy fathers, to determine what must be done with some poor veterans, some old pilgrims, and if it would not be better to console than to disturb them. I dare not go to you for fear of entering into some contention with you, but I confess to you the secrets of my conscience, and how I believe, above all, in the tradition of my country, which is, besides, that of St.Jerome."

All this is mingled with troublesome calculations about the celebration of Easter, and a great array of Scripture texts. It ends thus: "God forbid that we should delight our enemies—namely, the Jews, heretics, and pagans—by strife among Christians. . . . If God guides you to expel me from the

desert which I have sought here beyond the seas, I should only say with Jonah, 'Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm.' But before you throw me overboard, it is your duty to follow the example of the sailors, and to try first to come to land; perhaps even it might not be excess of presumption to suggest to you that many men follow the broad way, and that when there are a few who direct themselves to the narrow gate that leads to life, it would be better for you to encourage than to hinder them, lest you fall under the condemnation of that text which says, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' The harder the struggle, the more glorious is the crown. They, says St Gregory, who do not avoid the visible evil can scarcely believe in the hidden good. For this reason St Jerome enjoins the bishops to imitate the apostles, and the monks to follow the fathers, who have been perfect. The rules of the priests and those of the monks are very different; let each keep faithfully the profession which he has embraced, but let all follow the Gospel and Christ their head. . . . Yet pray for us, as we, despite our lowliness, pray for you. Regard us not as strangers to you; for all of us, whether Gauls or Britons, Spaniards or others, are members of the same body. I pray you all, my holy and patient fathers and

brethren, to forgive the loquacity and boldness of a man whose task is above his strength."[1]

When we think that neither in the life of Columbanus himself, which is written in minute detail, nor in the history of his age, is there any trace of repression or even of serious censure, directed against the foreign monk who thus set himself forth as a master and judge of the bishops, we cannot but admire this proof of the liberty then enjoyed by Christians, even where the rights of authority might have been most jealously preserved.

It is, however, doubtful whether this attitude

[1] "Dominis sanctis et in Christo patribus vel fratribus episcopis, presbyteris, cæterisque S. Ecclesiæ ordinibus, Columba peccator, salutem in Christo præmitto.—Gratias ago Deo meo quod mei causa in unum tanti congregati sunt sancti. . . . Utinam sæpius hoc ageretis. . . . Hoc potissimum debuit vobis inesse studium. . . . Multum nocuit nocetque ecclesiasticæ paci diversitas morum et varietas traditionum. . . . Unum deposco a vestra sanctitate . . . ut, quia hujus divinitatis auctor non sum, ac pro Christo Salvatore communi Domino et Deo in has terras peregrinus processerim, ut mihi liceat . . . in his silvis silere et vivere juxta ossa nostrorum fratrum decem et septem defunctorum sicut usque nunc licuit nobis inter vos vixisse duodecim annis, ut pro vobis, sicut usque nunc fecimus, oremus, ut debemus. Capiat nos simul, oro, Gallia, quos capiet regnum cœlorum, si boni simus meritis. . . . Hi sunt nostri canones, dominica et apostolica mandata. . . . Hæc arma, scutum et gladium . . . hæc nos moverunt de patria: hæc et hic servare contendimus, licet tepide . . . in his perseverare optamus sicut et seniores nostros facere conspeximus. . . . Vos, patres sancti, videte quid faciatis ad istos veteranos pauperes et peregrinos senes. . . . Confiteor conscientiæ meæ secreta, quod plus credo traditioni patriæ meæ. . . . Alia enim sunt et alia clericorum et monachorum documenta, et longe ab invicem separata. . . . De cætaro, patres, orate pro nobis, sicut et nos facimus, viles licet, pro vobis; et nolite nos a vobis alianos repulsare: unum enim corporis sumus commembra, sive Galli, sive Britanni, sive Iberi, sive quæque gentes. . . . Date veniam meæ loquacitati ac procacitati supra vires laboranti, patientissimi atque sanctissimi patres quique et fratres."—*Epist.* ii. ap. GALLANDUS, *Bibl. Veter. Patr.*, t. xii. p. 347.

had not shaken the influence which the virtues and sanctity of Columbanus had won for him among the Gallo-Franks. But he soon recovered it entirely in the conflict for the honour of Christian morals, which he undertook against Queen Brunehault and her grandson, and which we must relate in some detail, because this struggle was the first, and not the least remarkable, of those which arose on various occasions between the monks and Christian kings, who had been so long and naturally allied.

His struggle with King Thierry II. and Brunehault.

The Frank government in Gaul was, as is known, naturally divided into three distinct kingdoms, Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy. The ancient kingdom of the Burgondes or of Burgundy, finally conquered by the sons of Clovis, had been reconstituted by his grandson Gontran, the same who gave so good a reception to Columbanus, and it was at the northern extremity of this kingdom that Luxeuil was founded. Gontran having died without issue, 593.
Burgundy passed to his nephew, the young Childebert II., already king of Austrasia, the son of the celebrated Brunehault. He died shortly after, leav- 596.
ing two sons under age, Theodebert II. and Thierry II. The succession was divided between them: Theodebert had Austrasia, and Thierry, Burgundy; but their grandmother Brunehault immediately constituted herself their guardian and took possession of the power royal in the two kingdoms, whilst her terrible enemy, Fredegund, whom Gontran had so justly named *the enemy of God and man*, go-

verned Neustria in the name of her son Clotaire II, who was also a minor. The whole of Frankish Gaul was thus in the hands of two women, who governed it in the name of three kings, all minors.[1] But shortly the great feudal lords of Austrasia, among whom the indomitable independence of the Franks had been preserved more unbroken than among the Neustrians, disgusted by the violent and arbitrary bearing of Brunehault, obliged the
599. eldest of her grandsons to expel her from his kingdom. She consoled herself by establishing her residence with the young king Thierry in Burgundy, where she continued to exercise over the Burgundian nobles and bishops that haughty and often cruel sway which had made her presence intolerable in Austrasia.

To identify Brunehault in any degree with her impure and sinister rival, who was at once much more guilty and more prosperous than she, would be to judge her too severely. Gregory of Tours has praised her beauty, her good manners, her prudence and affability; and Gregory the Great, in congratulating the Franks on having so good a queen, honoured her with public eulogiums, especially in his cele-
Monastery of St Martin of Autun founded by Brunehault. brated diploma relative to St Martin of Autun, which she had built and endowed richly upon the spot where the holy bishop of Tours, going into the country of the Eduens, had destroyed the last sanc-

[1] Fredegund died a short time after, in 597, triumphing over all her enemies.

tuary of vanquished paganism at the peril of his life. This abbey, long celebrated for its wealth and for its flourishing schools, became afterwards the sepulchre of Brunehault; and, nine centuries after her cruel death, a daily distribution to the poor, called *the alms of Brunehault*,[1] kept her memory popular still.

But Brunehault, as she grew old, retained only the dauntless warmth of her early years; she preserved neither the generosity nor the uprightness. She sacrificed everything to a passion for rule, and to the temptation of re-establishing a kind of Roman monarchy.[2] This thirst for sovereignty led her so far —she, whose youth had been without reproach—as to encourage her grandsons in that polygamy which seems to have been the melancholy privilege of the Germanic and especially of the Merovingian princes.[3] From the fear of having a rival in power and honour near the throne of Thierry, she opposed with all her might every attempt to replace his concubines by a legitimate queen, and when, finally, he determined on espousing a Visigoth princess, Brunehault, though herself the daughter of a Visi-

[1] S. GREG. MAGN., *Epist.*, xiii. 6; GREG. TURON., *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 27. The Abbey of St Martin of Autun possessed, according to the Burgundian tradition, as many as a hundred thousand *manses*. The church, rebuilt with magnificence in the ninth century, was razed in 1750 by the monks themselves; they built another, which met with the same fate in 1808. The plough has since then passed over the site of the church and monastery. There is a valuable monograph of this abbey published by M. Bulliot, Autun, 1849, 2 vols.

[2] HENRI MARTIN, ii. 106.

[3] "Ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur."—TACIT., *De Mor. Germ.*, c. 18.

goth king, succeeded in disgusting her grandson
607-608. with his bride, and made him repudiate her at the end of a year. The bishop of Vienne, St Didier, who had advised the king to marry, was murdered by the ruffians whom the queen-mother had laid in wait for him.

However, the young Thierry had religious instincts. He was rejoiced to possess in his kingdom a holy man like Columbanus. He went often to visit him. Irish zeal took advantage of this to reprove him for his disorderly life, and to exhort him to seek the sweetness of a legitimate spouse, that the royal race might flow from an honourable queen, and not from prostitution. The young king promised amendment, but Brunehault easily turned him away from these good resolutions. Columbanus having gone to visit her at the manor of Bourcheresse, she presented to him the four sons whom Thierry already had by his concubines. "What would these children with me?" said the monk. "They are the sons of the king," said the queen; "strengthen them by thy blessing." "No!" answered Columbanus, "they shall not reign, for they are of bad origin." From that moment Brunehault swore war to the death against him. She began by debarring the monks of the monastery governed by Columbanus from leaving their convent, and the people from receiving them or giving them the slightest help. Columbanus endeavoured to enlighten Thierry and lead him back to a better way. He

went to visit him at his royal seat of Epoisses. Hearing that the abbot had arrived, but would not enter the palace, the king sent him a sumptuous repast. Columbanus refused to accept anything from the hand of him who forbade the servants of God to have access to the homes of other men, and at the sound of his curse, all the vessels which contained the various meats were miraculously broken in pieces. The king, alarmed by that wonder, came with his grandmother to ask his pardon, and to promise amendment. Columbanus, mollified, returned to his monastery, where he soon learned that Thierry had fallen back into his habitual debauchery. Then he wrote to the king a letter full of vehement reproaches, in which he threatened him with excommunication.[1]

Thus, this stranger, this Irish missionary, the obliged guest of King Gontran, would venture to go the length of excommunicating the King of Burgundy, the heir of his benefactor! Brunehault had no difficulty in raising the principal leudes of the court of Thierry against that unaccustomed boldness; she even undertook to persuade the bishops to interfere in order to censure the rule of the new institution. Excited by all that he heard going on around him, Thierry resolved to take the offensive, and pre-

[1] "Gratulabatur quia in termino regni sui B. Columbanum haberet. . . . Ut non potius legitimæ conjugis solamine frueretur, ut regalis proles ex honorabili regina proderet, et non ex lupanaribus videretur emergi. . . . Apud Spissiam villam publicam. . . . Litteras verberibus plenas . . ."—JONAS, c. 31, 32.

sented himself at Luxeuil to demand a reckoning with the abbot, why he went against the customs of the country, and why the interior of the convent was not open to all Christians, and even to women; for it was one of the grievances of Brunehault, that Columbanus had interdicted even her, although queen, from crossing the threshold of the monastery. The young king went as far as the refectory, saying that he would have the entrance free to all, or that they must give up all royal gifts. Columbanus, with his accustomed boldness, said to the king, "If you would violate the severity of our rules, we have no need of your gifts: and if you would come here to destroy our monastery, know that your kingdom shall be destroyed with all your race."

The king was afraid and went out; but he soon replied: "Thou art in hopes perhaps that I will procure thee the crown of martyrdom; but I am not fool enough for that; only, since it pleases thee to live apart from all relation with the secular people, thou hast but to return whence thou camest, even to thy own country." All the nobles of the royal suite exclaimed that they would no longer tolerate in their land men who thus isolated themselves from the world. Columbanus replied that he would leave his monastery only when taken from it by force. He was then taken and conducted to Besançon, to wait there the ultimate orders of the king.[1] After which a sort of blockade was estab-

Columbanus expelled from Luxeuil for the first time.

610.

[1] "Ea maxime pro causa infesta erat eo quod . . . sibi quæ regina erat

lished round Luxeuil to prevent any one from leaving it.

The monks then recollected that they had among them a young man called Agilus, son of that Agnoald, prime minister of Gontran, who, twenty years before, had obtained for Columbanus the gift of Luxeuil, and who afterwards intrusted his son, then a child, to the Irish abbot to be trained in monastic life. They charged Agilus with the mission of obtaining the abolition of this interdict from the king and queen. The young monk fell into the hands of a nephew of the Duke of Sequania, who, under pretence of hunting, guarded the avenues of the monastery; but by the sign of the cross, he made the sword fall, and withered the arm which was raised to strike him, and was permitted to proceed on his way. By one of these sudden and transitory compunctions so frequent in the life of the Merovingians, Thierry and his grandmother received the envoy of the monks with demonstrations of humility, prostrated themselves before him, raised the blockade of the monastery, and even made him costly presents.[1] St Agilus.

But their hearts were not softened in respect to

idem contradixerat."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 7, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. "Ut erat audax, atque animo vigens. . . . Si ob hanc causam hoc in loco venisti. . . . Martyrii coronam me tibi illaturum speras: non esse me tantæ dementiæ scias . . . . Qua veneras, ea via repedare studeas . . . . Aulicorum consona voce vota prorumpunt."—JONAS, c. 23.

[1] "Sub obtentu venantium . . . observabant exitus monasterii more latronum. . . . Rex et regina . . . humo coram vestigiis illius procumbunt."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 7, 8.

Columbanus at Besançon.

Columbanus. He, surrounded at Besançon by the respect of all, and left at freedom in the town, took advantage of it to ascend one morning to the height of a rock, on which the citadel is now situated, and which is encircled by the tortuous stream of the Doubs.[1] From this height he surveyed the road which led to Luxeuil; he seemed to investigate there the obstacles which prevented his return. His resolution was taken; he descended, left the town, and directed his steps towards his monastery. At the news of his return, Thierry and Brunehault sent a count with a cohort of soldiers to lead him back into exile. Then ensued a scene which, during twelve centuries, and even in our own days, has been often repeated between the persecutors and their victims. The messengers of the royal will found him in the choir, chanting the service with all his community. "Man of God," they said, "we pray you to obey the king's orders and ours, and to return from whence you came." "No," answered Columbanus, "after having left my country for the service of Jesus Christ, I cannot think that my Creator means me to return." At these

[1] The description which Jonas gives of this spot is even at the present time strikingly correct, and was especially so before Louis XIV., after the conquest of Franche-Comté, had demolished the cathedral of St Etienne and all the buildings which covered the sides of the rock: "Adscendet dominica die in verticem arduum ad cacumen montis illius (ita enim situs urbis habetur, cum domorum densitas in diffuso latere proclivi montis sita sit, prorumpant ardua in sublimibus cacumina quæ undique abscissi fluminis *Doux* alveo vallante nullatenus commeantibus viam pandit), ibique usque ad medium diei exspectat, si aliquis iter ad monasterium revertendi prohibeat."

words the count withdrew, leaving the most ferocious of his soldiers to accomplish the rest. Subdued by the firmness of the abbot, who repeated that he would yield only to force, they threw themselves on their knees before him, weeping and entreating him to pardon them, and not to oblige them to use the violence which they were compelled to employ, on pain of their life. At the thought of a danger which was no longer personal to himself the intrepid Irishman yielded, and left the sanctuary which he had founded and inhabited for twenty years, but which he was never to see again.[1] 590-610.

[1] "Vir Dei, precamur . . . eo itinere quo primum adventasti. . . . Non reor . . . semel natali solo ob Christi timorem relicto. . . Relictis quibusdam quibus ferocitas animi inerat."—JONAS, c. 36. How can we fail to be struck with the identity of the struggles and triumphs of the Church throughout all ages, when we see what passed at Luxeuil, in 610, renewed, after twelve centuries, against the poor monks in Caucasia? We read in the *Journal des Debats* of April 23, 1845: "We publish some details of the expulsion of the Catholic missionaries from the provinces of Caucasia. On the first day of the year, two carts, escorted by Cossacks armed with lances and pistols, stopped before the gate of the Convent of Tiflis. Some of the agents of police immediately entered the convent and ordered the monks to get into the carts. The latter declared that they would only surrender to force; then they entered the church of the convent and knelt before the altar. The agents waited for some time; but when at the end of an hour they saw that the monks did not manifest any intention of obeying, they repeated to them the order to depart. The missionaries answered that they would not voluntarily quit the post which had been confided to them by their spiritual head. This answer was conveyed to General Gurko, Governor of Tiflis, who ordered them to be brought out by force and removed into the carts. The order was immediately executed. The missionaries of Gori were expelled in the same manner." The same journal relates, in its next day's number, how similar violences were exercised, no longer in the Caucasus, but in France, upon the Hospitaller nuns of St Joseph at Avignon, in the same month of April 1845. The expulsion of the Irish and English monks of La Trappe of Melleray, in 1831, bears also some features of resemblance to the history of Luxeuil.

His monks surrounded him with lamentations as if they were following his funeral. He consoled them by telling them that this persecution, far from being ruinous to them, would only promote the increase of "the monastic nation." They would all have followed him into exile; but a royal order forbade that consolation to any but the monks of Irish or Britannic origin. Brunehault was anxious to free herself from these audacious and independent islanders as well as from their leader, but she had no desire to ruin the great establishment of which Burgundy was already proud. The saint, accompanied by his Irish brethren, departed into exile.

His journey to Besançon and Nantes.

The history of his journey, carefully recorded by his disciples, is full of information respecting the places and customs of Frankish Gaul. He was taken through Besançon a second time, then through Autun, Avallon, along the Cure and the Yonne to Auxerre, and from thence to Nevers, where he embarked upon the Loire. He marked each stage of his journey by miraculous cures and other wonders, which, nevertheless, did not diminish the rancour which he had excited. On the road to Avallon, he met an equerry of King Thierry, who attempted to pierce him with his lance. At Nevers, at the moment of embarking, a cruel hanger-on of the escort took an oar and struck Lua, one of the most pious of Columbanus's companions, to quicken his entrance into the boat. The saint cried, "Cruel

wretch, what right hast thou to aggravate my trouble? How darest thou to strike the weary members of Christ? Remember that the divine vengeance shall await thee on this spot where thou hast struck the servant of God." And in fact, on his return, this wretch fell into the water and was drowned on the very spot where he had struck Lua.[1]

Arrived at Orleans, he sent two of his brethren into the town to buy provisions; but no one would either sell or give them anything in opposition to the royal orders. They were treated as outlaws—enemies of the king, whom the Salic law forbade his subjects to receive, under the penalty (enormous in those days) of six hundred deniers. Even the churches were closed against them by the king's orders. But, in retracing their steps, they met a Syrian woman, one of that Oriental colony whose presence in Gaul has been already remarked under Childebert I. She asked them whence they came, and, on hearing, offered them hospitality, and gave them all that they needed. "I am a stranger like you," she said, "and I come from the distant sun of the East." She had a blind husband, to whom

A Syrian woman receives them hospitably at Orleans.

[1] "Velut funus subsequentibus. . . . Ob multiplicandas plebes monachorum hanc esse datam occasionem. . . . Quos sui ortus terra dederat, vel qui a Britannico arvo ipsum secuti. . . . Custos equorum . . . occurrit. . . . Ubi lento conamine in scapham insilirent. . . . Arrepto remo. . . . Cur crudelis mœrorem mihi addis."—JONAS, c. 36, 38, 40. Mabillon (*Annal.*, t. i. p. 293) supposes that this Lua might be the Irish saint of whom St Bernard speaks as having founded a hundred monasteries; but nothing could be more improbable.

Columbanus restored sight. The people of Orleans were touched by this incident; but they dared only testify their veneration for the exile in secret.[1]

Passing before the town of Tours, Columbanus begged to be permitted to pray at the tomb of the great St Martin, who was equally venerated by the Celts, Romans, and Franks; but his savage guardians ordered the boatmen to increase the speed of their oars, and keep in the middle of the stream. However, an invisible force stayed the boat; it directed itself towards the port. Columbanus landed, and spent the night near the holy tomb. The Bishop of Tours found him there, and took him to dine in his house. At table he was asked why he was returning to his own country. He answered, "This dog of a Thierry has hunted me from the home of my brethren." Then one of the company, who was a leude or trusty vassal of the king, said, in a low voice, "Would it not be better to give men milk to drink rather than wormwood?" "I see," answered Columbanus, "that thou wouldst keep thy oath to King Thierry. Well! say to thy friend and thy lord, that three years from this time he and his children will be destroyed, and that his whole race shall be rooted out by God." "Why do you speak thus, servant of God?" said the leude. "I cannot

[1] *Lex Salica*, art. 56, edit. Merkel. ROTH, *Beneficialwesen*, p. 140. "Regio timore aut vendere aut dare nihil audebant. . . . Nam et ego advena sum ex longinquo Orientis sole . . . vir meus ex eodem genere Syrorum sicut et ego."—JONAS, c. 41.

keep silent," answered the saint, "what God has charged me to speak."[1]

His letter to the monks of Luxeuil.

Arrived at Nantes, and on the eve of leaving the soil of Gaul, his thoughts turned towards Luxeuil, and he wrote a letter, which begins thus: "To his dearest sons, his dearest pupils, to his brethren in abstinence, to all the monks, Columbanus the sinner." In this he pours out his heart. Obscure, confused, passionate, interrupted by a thousand different recollections and emotions, this letter is, notwithstanding, the most complete monument of his genius and character which Columbanus has left to us. With these personal sentiments his concern for the present and future destiny of his beloved community of Luxeuil is always mingled. He sets forth the arrangements most likely, as he believes, to guarantee its existence, by purity of elections and internal harmony. He seems even to foresee the immense development of monastic colonies which was to proceed from Luxeuil, in a passage where he says, "Wherever sites are suitable, wherever God will build with you, go and multiply, you and the myriads of souls which shall be born of you."[2]

It is specially delightful to see how, in that austere and proud soul, friendship and paternal affection preserve all their rights. He recalls to mind with

[1] "Canis me Theodoricus meis a fratribus abegit. . . . Humili voce . . . si melius esset lacte potari quam absynthio? . . . Cognosco te regis Theodorici fœdera velle servare. . . . Amico tuo et domino."

[2] "Si vero vobis placent, et Deus illic vobiscum ædificat, crescite ibi benedictione in mille millia."

tender solicitude a brother who was not present at the moment of his farewell; "Always take care," he says, "of Waldolenus, if he is still with you. May God give him everything that is good: may he become humble: and give him for me the kiss which I could not give him myself." He exhorts his monks to confidence, spiritual strength, patience, but, above all, to peace and union. He foresees in that perpetual question about Easter a cause of division; and he desires that those who would disturb the peace of the house should be dismissed from it. Confessions, counsels, and exhortations crowd upon his pen. He sometimes addresses the whole community, sometimes a monk called Attalus, whom he had named as his successor.

"Thou knowest, my well-beloved Attalus, how little advantage it is to form only one body if there is not also one heart. . . . As for me, my soul is rent asunder. I have desired to serve everybody, I have trusted everybody, and it has made me almost mad. Be thou wiser than I: I would not see thee taking up the burden under which I have sweated. To bind all in the enclosure of the Rule, I have attempted to attach again to the root of our tree all those branches whose frailty had separated them from mine. . . . However, thou art already better acquainted with it than I. Thou wilt know how to adapt its precepts to each. Thou wilt take into account the great diversity of character among men. Thou wilt then diversify thyself, thou wilt

multiply thyself for the good of those who shall obey thee with faith and love, and yet must still fear lest that very love should become for thee a danger. But what is this that I do? Behold how I persuade thee to undertake the immense labour from which I myself have stolen away!"

Further on, grief carries him away, and bursts forth only to yield immediately to invincible courage: and the recollections of classic antiquity mingle with evangelical instructions to dictate to our Irishman some of the finest and proudest words which Christian genius has ever produced. "I had at first meant to write thee a letter of sorrow and tears, but knowing well that thy heart is overwhelmed with cares and labours, I have changed my style, I have sought to dry thy tears rather than to call them forth. I have permitted only gentleness to be seen outside, and chained down grief in the depths of my soul. But my own tears begin to flow! I must drive them back; for it does not become a good soldier to weep in front of the battle. After all, this that has happened to us is nothing new. Is it not what we have preached every day? Was there not of old a philosopher wiser than the others, who was thrown into prison for maintaining, against the opinion of all, that there was but one God? The gospels also are full of all that is necessary to encourage us. They were written for that purpose, to teach the true disciples of Christ crucified to follow him, bearing

their cross. Our perils are many: the struggle which threatens us is severe, and the enemy terrible; but the recompense is glorious, and the freedom of our choice is manifest. Without adversaries, no conflict; and without conflict, no crown. Where the struggle is, there is courage, vigilance, fervour, patience, fidelity, wisdom, firmness, prudence: out of the fight, misery and disaster. Thus, then, without war, no crown! And I add, without freedom, no honour!"

However, he had to come to a conclusion, and knew not how to do it; for he always begins again, and often repeats himself. But others interrupted and put an end to the outpouring of his heart. "While I write," says he, "they come to tell me that the ship is ready—the ship which is to carry me back against my will to my country. . . . The end of my parchment obliges me to finish my letter. Love is not orderly: it is this which has made it confused. I would have abridged everything that I might say everything; I have not succeeded. Adieu, dear hearts: pray for me that I may live in God."

[1] "Dulcissimis filiis, discentibus carissimis, fratribus frugalibus, cunctis simul monachis. . . . Semper Waldolenum tene . . . humillis fiat: et meum illi da osculum quod tunc festinans non habuit. . . . Tu scis, amantissime Attale . . . quid enim prodest habere corpus, et non habere cor? . . . Dum volui totos adjuvare . . et dum omnibus credidi pene, factus sum stultus. Ideo tu prudentior esto: nolo subeas tantum onus, sub quo ego sudavi. . . . Ergo diversus esto, et multiplex ad curam eorum, qui tibi obedierint cum fide et amore: sed tu et ipsum eorum timo amorem, quia tibi periculosus erit. . . . Lacrymosam tibi volui scribere epistolam: sed quia scio cor tuum idcirco necessariis tantum allegatis, duris et ipsis arduisque, altero stylo usus sum, malens obturare

The bishop and count of Nantes hastened the departure; but the Irish vessel in which the property and companions of Columbanus were embarked, and to which he was to go in a boat, being then at the mouth of the Loire, was cast back by the waves, and remained three days ashore upon the beach. Then the captain landed the monks and all that belonged to them, and continued his voyage. Columbanus was permitted to go where he would.

He goes to the kings of Neustria and Austrasia.

He directed his steps towards the court of the King of Soissons and Neustria, Clotaire II., who, after an unfortunate war with the kings of Austrasia and Burgundy, had been despoiled of the greater part of Neustria, and reduced to the possession of twelve counties between the right bank of the Seine and the Channel.[1] This son of Frede-

quam provocare lacrymas. Foris itaque actus est sermo mitis, intus inclusus est dolor. En promanant lacrymæ; sed melius est obturare fontem: non enim fortis est militis plorare. Non est hoc novum quod nobis contigit: hoc maxime quotidie prædicabamus. Quidam philosophus olim, sapientior cæteris, eo quod contra omnium opinionem unum Deum esse dixerit, in carcerem trusus est. Evangelia plena sunt de hac causa et inde sunt maxime conscripta: hæc est enim veritas Evangelii, ut vere Christi crucifixi discipuli eum sequantur cum cruce. . . . Multa carne pericula: cognosce causam belli, gloriæ magnitudinem, fortem non nescias hostem, et libertatem in medio arbitrii. . . . Si tollis hostem, tollis et pugnam. Si tollis pugnam, tollis et coronam. . . . Si tollis libertatem, tollis dignitatem. . . . Nunc mihi scribenti nuncius supervenit, narrans mihi navem parari. Amor non tenet ordinem; inde missa confusa est. Totum dicere volui in brevi. Totum non potui. . . . Orate pro me, viscera mea, ut Deo vivam."—*Epist.*, iv., ap. GALLANDUS, *Bibl. Veter. Patrum*, t. xii. p. 349.

[1] Thierry had added, on that occasion, all the country between Seine and Loire to the ancient kingdom of Orleans and Burgundy. This explains why his authority was recognised in all the countries traversed by Columbanus even to Nantes.

gund, faithful to his mother's hatred for Brunehault and her family, gave a cordial reception to the victim of his enemy, endeavoured to retain him in his court, received with a good grace the remonstrances which the undaunted apostle, always faithful to his part of public censor, addressed to him upon the disorders of his court, and promised amendment. He consulted Columbanus about the quarrel which had broken out between the two brothers, Theodebert and Thierry, both of whom asked his assistance. Columbanus advised him to have nothing to do with it, since in three years both their kingdoms would fall into his power. He afterwards asked an escort to conduct him to Theodebert, king of Metz, or Austrasia, whose states he desired to cross on his way to Italy. Passing through Paris, Meaux, and Champagne, the chiefs of the Frank nobility brought their children to him, and he blessed many, destined, as shall be seen, to inherit his spirit and extend his work. Theodebert, now at war with his brother Thierry, gave the exiled abbot the same reception as Clotaire II. had done, but was equally unsuccessful in retaining him.

At the court of the king of Austrasia, which was not far from Burgundy, he had the consolation of seeing several of his brethren of Luxeuil, who escaped to rejoin him. At their head, and encouraged by the promises and eager protection of Theodebert, he made up his mind to preach the

faith among the still pagan nations who were subject to the Austrasian government, and inhabited the countries about the Rhine. This had always been his ambition, his inclination, and the work he preferred.[1] After sixty years of labour devoted to the reform of kings and nations already Christian, he began the second phase of his life—that of preaching to the infidels. He becomes a missionary.

He consequently embarked upon the Rhine, below Mayence, and, ascending this river and its tributaries as far as the Lake of Zurich, remained for some time at Tuggen,[2] and at Arbon, finding here and there some traces of Christianity sown under the Roman or Frank government,[3] and established himself finally at Bregentz, upon the Lake of Constance, amid the ruins of an ancient Roman town. The Sueves and Alamans (*Alamanni*), subject to the Franks since the victory of Clovis at Tolbiac, who then occupied all Eastern Helvetia, were, with all the country between the Aar, the Alps, and the Lech, idolaters, worshippers of the god Woden, and His mission among the Alamans with St Gall.

[1] "Mei voti fuit gentes visitare et Evangelium eis a nobis prædicari: sed fel modo referente eorum teporem, pene meum tulit inde amorem." —*Epist. ad Fratres.*

[2] The new Bollandists (t. vii. Oct. p. 870) prove that this was not at Zug, as all former historians have said, but at Tuggen, which is situated at the point where the Limmat enters the Lake of Zurich, and which answers to the description of the hagiographer: "Ad caput lacus, in locum qui Tucconia dicitur."—*Vit. S. Galli*, c. 4.

[3] We shall be pardoned for not giving the legend of St Fridolin, another Irish monk, to whom was attributed a first mission into Alamannia and the foundation of Sœckingen, on the Rhine, between Bâle and Schaffhausen. Compare MABILLON, *Ann. Benedi.*, t. i. p. 221, and RETTBERG, t. ii. p. 33.

of violent and cruel disposition. In announcing the Gospel to them, Columbanus displayed all the impetuosity of his temper, which age had not lessened. His principal assistant was another Irishman named Gall, who was not less daring than himself, but who was well educated, and had the gift of preaching in the German language as well as in the Latin. Sometimes they broke the boilers in which the pagans prepared beer,[1] to offer as a sacrifice to Woden; sometimes they burned the temples, and threw into the lake the gilded idols whom the inhabitants showed them as the tutelary gods of their country. Such proceedings naturally excited against them the fury of the natives, and exposed them to great dangers. They had to flee to Zug, from which they were expelled with blows. At Bregentz they had more success, and made some conversions, but without appeasing the rage, or conciliating the liking, of the mass of the people. The little colony, however, remained there for three years. They resumed cenobitical life. They had at first to contend against hunger; for the inhabitants would give them nothing. They had to live upon wild birds, which came to them like the manna to the children of Israel, or upon woodland fruits,

[1] The Italian monk who has written the life of Columbanus speaks elsewhere of beer as the national drink of the races which were not Roman: "Cerevisia quæ ex frumenti et hordei succo excoquitur, quamque præ cæteris in orbe terrarum gentibus, præter Scoticas et barbaras gentes quæ oceanum incolunt, usitatur in Gallia, Britannia, Hibernia, Germania, cæteræque quæ ab eorum moribus non desiscant."—Compare *Vit. S. Salabergæ*, c. 19, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., ii. 407.

which they had to dispute with the beasts of the forests. But they had soon a garden of vegetables and fruit-trees. Fish was also a resource; Columbanus himself made the nets; Gall, the learned and eloquent preacher, threw them into the lake, and had considerable draughts. One night, while he watched in silence in his boat among his nets, he heard the demon of the mountain call to the demon of the waters. "Here I am," answered the latter. "Arise, then," said the first, "and help me to chase away the strangers who have expelled me from my temple; it will require us both to drive them away." "What good should we do?" answered the demon of the waters; "here is one of them upon the waterside whose nets I have tried to break, but I have never succeeded. He prays continually, and never sleeps. It will be labour in vain; we shall make nothing of it." Then Gall made the sign of the cross, and said to them, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave these regions without daring to injure any one." Then he hastened to land and awoke the abbot, who immediately rang the bells for nocturnal service; but before the first psalm had been intoned, they heard the yells of the demons echoing from the tops of the surrounding hills, at first with fury, then losing themselves in the distance, and dying away like the confused voices of a routed army.[1]

Dialogue between demons on the lake.

[1] "Isti sunt dii veteres, et antiqui hujus locis tutores. . . . Non

To this fine legend, which depicts so well all that could move the soul of these intrepid missionaries upon a coast so long inhospitable, we must add the vision which deterred Columbanus from undertaking a still more distant and difficult mission. He was pursued by the thought of bearing the light of the Gospel among the Sclave nations, and especially among the Wendes, whose country extended into the midst of the Germanic races, and to the south of the Danube. Like St Patrick, the remembrance of the nations who knew not Christ pursued him into his sleep. One night he saw in a dream an angel, who said to him, "The world is before thee; take the right hand or the left hand, but turn not aside from thy road, if thou wouldst eat the fruit of thy labours."[1] He interpreted this

Columbanus gives up the thought of converting the Sclave nations.

solum latinæ, sed etiam barbaricæ sermonis cognitionem non parvam habebat. . . . Irâ et furore commoti, gravi indignationis rabie turbidi recesserunt. . . . Audivit dæmonem de culmine montis pari suo clamantem qui erat in abditis maris, quo respondente: Adsum: Montanus . . . Consurge . . . in adjutorium mihi. . . . Heus quod de tuis calamitatibus narras. . . . En unus illorum est in pelago cui nunquam nocere potero. . . . Auditæ sunt diræ voces dæmonorum per montium summitates, et quasi discedentium ejulatus cum terrore confusus."—WALAFR. STRABO., *Vit. S. Galli*, c. 4, 6, 7, ap. PERTZ, *Monumenta*, ii. 7; BOLLAND., t. vii. Oct., p. 884; ACT. SS. O. S. B., ii. 221. Compare JONAS, c. 54, 55; KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*, t. i. p. 380; lastly, OZANAM, *Etudes Germaniques*, ii. 122, who, as usual, has completely and nobly discussed the mission of Columbanus and his companions in Helvetia. The monastery of Mehrerau, which Columbanus founded, at the gates of the present town of Bregenz, has just been re-established by a colony of Cistercians, unworthily expelled by the Argovian Radicals from their secular patrimony at Wettingen, near Aarau.

[1] "Cogitatio in mentem ruit, ut Venetiorum, qui et Sclavi dicuntur, terminos adiret. . . . Cernis quod maneat totus orbis descriptus?"—JONAS, c. 56. Wendes are still to be found in Styria and Carinthia.

dream into a sign that he should have no success in the enterprise of which he dreamed, and accordingly abandoned it.

The Sclaves formed, as is well known, with the Celts and Germans, the third of the great races which occupied Central Europe. If Columbanus, a Celt by origin and education, but a monk and missionary for almost all his life among the Germans, had entered the countries already invaded by Sclavonian tribes, his influence would have been brought to bear upon all the families of nations who have predominated in modern Christendom. This glory was denied to him: it was enough for him to have been one of the most illustrious of those intermediary agents who have laboured under the impulse of Christianity for the fusion of the two greatest races of the West.

He returns to Theodebert.

During this sojourn at Bregentz, our saint went, it is not known on what occasion, to see King Theodebert, who was still at war with his brother, the King of Burgundy. Enlightened by a presentiment, and inspired by gratitude to this young prince, he counselled him to yield, and take refuge in the bosom of the Church by becoming a monk, instead of risking at once his kingdom and his salvation. Theodebert had, besides, great need of expiating his sins: very profligate, like all the Merovingians, he had just killed Queen Bilichild, a young slave whom his grandmother Brunehault had made him marry in his youth, in order to be

able to take another wife. The advice of Columbanus caused great laughter to the king and all the Franks who surrounded him. "Such a thing has never been heard of," said they, "as that a Frank king should become a monk of his own free will." "Well," said Columbanus, in the middle of their exclamations, "if he will not be a monk of free will, he will be one by force."[1] Saying this, the saint returned to his cell on the banks of Lake Constance. He learned soon after that his persecutor, Thierry, had again invaded the states of his protector Theodebert, and had routed and pursued the latter to
612. the gates of Cologne. The decisive battle between the two brothers took place on the plains of Tolbiac, where their great-grandfather Clovis had founded, by victory, the Christian kingdom of the Franks.[2]

Defeat and death of Theodebert.

Theodebert was vanquished and taken: Thierry sent him to the implacable Brunehault, who had long disowned him as her grandson, and who, still furious at her expulsion from the kingdom of Austrasia, had his head shaved, made him assume the monastic dress, and shortly after put him to death.

At the time when the second battle of Tolbiac was going on, Columbanus was wandering in a wood near his retreat with his favourite disciple Cagnoald,

[1] "Ridiculum excitavit: aiebant enim nunquam se audiisse Merovingum in regno sublimatum voluntarium clericum fuisse. Detestantibus ergo omnibus."—JONAS, c. 57. This recalls the words of Childebert, quoted by Gregory of Tours: "Was ever a Merovingian shaven?" and the famous saying of Clotilde concerning her grandsons: "Better that they be dead than shaven." See the preceding Book, p. 256, note.

[2] HENRI MARTIN, ii. 118.

a young and noble Frank, son of one of the principal leudes of Theodebert, whom he had brought with him from the neighbourhood of Meaux. As he was reading, seated upon the fallen trunk of an old oak, he slept, and saw in a dream the two brothers coming to blows. At his waking he told his companion of this vision, sighing over all that bloodshed. The son of Theodebert's minister answered him, "But, dear father, help Theodebert with your prayers, that he may overcome Thierry, your common enemy." Columbanus answered him, "Thou givest me a foolish counsel; not such was the will of our Lord, who commands us to pray for our enemies."[1]

However, the whole of Austrasia had fallen by the death of Theodebert into the hands of Brunehault and Thierry, and the banks of the upper Rhine, where their victim had found a refuge, was a dependency of the Austrasian kingdom. Besides, the inhabitants of the environs of Bregentz, always irritated by the violent destruction of their idols, complained to the duke of the province that these strangers scared the game of the royal chase, by infesting the forests with their presence. Their cows were stolen, two of the monks were even slain in an ambuscade. It was necessary to depart. Columbanus said, "We have found a golden cup, but it is full of serpents. The God whom we serve will lead us elsewhere." He had long de-

[1] "Super quercus putrefactæ truncum librum legens residebat. . . . Pater mi . . . ut communem debellet hostem."—JONAS, 57.

sired to go to Italy, and reckoned on a good reception from the king of the Lombards. At the moment of departure, the fiery Gall, seized with fever, asked leave to remain. Columbanus was irritated by this weakness. "Ah, my brother," said he, "art thou already disgusted with the labours I have made thee endure? But since thou wilt separate thyself from me, I debar thee, as long as I live, from saying mass."[1] Poor Gall did not deserve these reproaches; he remained in Helvetia, as will be seen, only to redouble the zeal of his apostolic labours, and to found there one of the most celebrated monasteries in Christendom.

Columbanus crosses the Alps and reaches Lombardy.

Columbanus kept with him only a single disciple, Attalus, and, notwithstanding, pursued his journey across the Alps. When we picture to ourselves the fatigues and dangers of such an undertaking in the days of Columbanus, we imagine that it was the image and recollection of this course which inspired the beginning of one of the instructions addressed to his monks, in which the unwearied traveller compares life to a journey.

"Oh mortal life! how many hast thou deceived, seduced, and blinded! Thou fliest and art nothing; thou appearest and art but a shade; thou risest and art but a vapour; thou fliest every day, and every day thou comest; thou fliest in coming, and

[1] "Discentes venationem publicam propter illorum infestationem peregrinorum esse turbatam. . . . Invenimus . . . concham auream, sed venenatisser pentibus plenam. . . . Scio, frater, jam tibi onerosum esse tantis pro me laboribus fatigari."—*Vita S. Galli*, c. 8, 9.

comest in flying, the same at the point of departure, different at the end; sweet to the foolish, bitter to the wise; those who love thee know thee not, and those only know thee who despise thee. What art thou, then, oh human life? Thou art the way of mortals and not their life; thou beginnest in sin and endest in death. Thou art then the way of life and not life itself. Thou art only a road, and an unequal road, long for some, short for others; wide for these, narrow for those; joyous for some, sad for others, but for all equally rapid and without return. It is necessary, then, oh miserable human life! to fathom thee, to question thee, but not to trust in thee. We must traverse thee without dwelling in thee—no one dwells upon a great road: we but march on through it, to reach the country beyond."[1]

Agilulf, king of the Lombards, and Theodelind.

The king of the Lombards was that Agilulf, of whom we have already had occasion to speak in connection with St Gregory the Great; his wife was Theodelind, the noble rival of Clotilde. He received the venerable exile with respect and confidence; and Columbanus had scarcely arrived in Milan when he immediately began to write against the Arians, for this fatal heresy still predominated among the Lombards; those who had not remained pagan, especially among the nobles, had fallen victims to

[1] "Nullus enim in via habitat, sed ambulat: ut qui ambulant in via habitent in patria."—*Instructio* v., *Quod præsens vita non sit dicenda Vita, sed Via.* I borrow this translation, completing it, from the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, t. ii. p. 91.

Arianism. The Irish apostle thus found a new occupation for his missionary zeal, which he could pursue successfully without giving up his love for solitude. Agilulf bestowed upon him a territory called Bobbio, situated in a retired gorge of the Apennines, between Genoa and Milan, not far from the famous shores of Trebbia, where Hannibal encamped and vanquished the Romans. An old church, dedicated to St Peter, was in existence there. Columbanus undertook to restore it, and to add to it a monastery. Despite his age, he shared in the workmen's labours, and bent his old shoulders under the weight of enormous beams of fir-wood, which it seemed impossible to transport across the precipices and perpendicular paths of these mountains. This abbey of Bobbio was his last stage. He made it the citadel of orthodoxy against the Arians, and lighted there a focus of knowledge and instruction which was long the light of northern Italy.[1]

Foundation of Bobbio.

There, as everywhere, and throughout all his life, our saint continued to cultivate those literary studies which had charmed his youth. At sixty-eight he addressed to a friend an epistle in Adonic

His last poetry.

[1] "Tum per prærupta saxorum scopula trabes ex abietibus inter densa saltus locis inaccessibilibus cæderentur. . . . Suis ac suorum humeris immane pondus imponebat."—JONAS, c. 60. The school and library of Bobbio rank among the most celebrated of the middle ages. Muratori has given a catalogue of 700 manuscripts which they possessed in the tenth century. Thence came the famous palimpsest from which Cardinal Maï has taken the *De Republica* of Cicero. The monastery was only suppressed under the French dominion in 1803: the church still subsists, and serves as a parish church.

verse, which everywhere bears the impression of those classic recollections which the monks of that period cultivated. He prays him not to despise "these little verses by which Sappho, the illustrious muse, loved to charm her contemporaries, and to prefer for a moment these frivolous trifles to the most learned productions."[1] He appeals to the recollections of the Golden Fleece, of the judgment of Paris, of Danaë's shower of gold, and of the collar of Amphiaraüs. Then his thoughts grew sober as they rose. "Thus I wrote, overwhelmed by the cruel pains of my weak body, and by age, for, while the times hasten their course, I have reached the eighteenth olympiad of my life. Everything passes, and the irreparable days fly away. Live, be strong, be happy, and remind yourself of sad old age."[2]

His remonstrance with Pope Boniface IV.

To this last period of his life also belongs that letter, so differently interpreted, which he wrote to Pope Boniface IV. in the name of King Agilulf, who had scarcely escaped from the bonds of Arianism, when he unluckily undertook to protect the partisans of the *Three Chapters*, who called in

[1] "Inclyta vates
Nomine Sapho
Versibus istis
Dulce solebat
Edere Carmen.
. . . Doctiloquorum
Carmina linquens,
Frivola nostra
Suscipe lætus."

[2] Translation by OZANAM.

question the orthodoxy of the Holy See, which, according to their view, had placed itself in opposition to a General Council.[1] Columbanus wrote from the midst of a mixed population of orthodox and schismatics, of heretics and even of pagans. Evidently little acquainted in his own person with the point at issue, he made himself the organ of the restlessness and defiance of the party which assumed to be the only one faithful to the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon against the error of Eutychus. While he appeals, in a series of extravagant and obscure apostrophes, to the indulgence of the Pope for a *foolish Scot*, charged to write on account of a Lombard, a king of the Gentiles, he acquaints the pontiff with the imputations brought against him, and entreats him to prove his orthodoxy and excommunicate his detractors.[2] Doubtless some of the expressions which he employs would be now regarded as disrespectful and justly rejected. But in these young and vigorous times, faith and austerity could be more indulgent. If his letter is impressed

[1] The *Three Chapters* (three works by Theodore of Mopsueste, Ibas, and Theodoret, were thus named) had been condemned as *Nestorian* by the Council of Constantinople (5th œcumenical) in 553, and by Pope Vigilant: a condemnation resisted by the bishops of Africa and Istria as throwing discredit on the Council of Chalcedon, which had, according to them, approved of these writings. The Lombards declared for these bishops, who were tolerated by Gregory the Great on account of their zeal against the Arians; but under Boniface IV. the quarrel was revived. Agilulf and Theodelind engaged Columbanus in it.

[2] "Quando rex gentilis peregrinum scribere, Longobardus, Scotum hebetem rogat . . . quis non mirabitur potiusquam calumniabitur."—*Epist.* v. *ad. Bonif. Pap., ed.* GALLAND., p. 355.

with all the frankness and independence of the Celt, of the Briton, a little too biting,[1] as he says himself, it breathes also the tender and filial devotion of a Roman, impassioned in his anxiety for the honour of the Holy See. Let it be judged by this fragment: "I confess that I lament over the bad reputation of the chair of St Peter in this country. I speak to you not as a stranger, but as a disciple, as a friend, as a servant. I speak freely to our masters, to the pilots of the vessel of the Church, and I say to them, Watch! and despise not the humble advice of the stranger. We Irish, who inhabit the extremities of the world, are the disciples of St Peter and St Paul, and of the other apostles who have written under dictation of the Holy Spirit. We receive nothing more than the apostolic and evangelical doctrine. There has never been either a heretic, a Jew, or a schismatic among us. The people whom I see here, who bear the burden of many heretics, are jealous; they disturb themselves like a frightened flock. Pardon me then, if, swimming among these rocks, I have said some words offensive to pious ears. The native liberty of my race has given me that boldness. With us it is not the person, it is the right which prevails. The love of evangelical peace makes me say everything. We are bound to the chair of St Peter; for however great and glorious Rome may be, it is this chair which makes her great and glorious among us.

How he reconciles his Celtic patriotism with Roman orthodoxy.

[1] "Mordacius."

Although the name of the ancient city, the glory of Ausonia, has been spread throughout the world as something supremely august, by the too great admiration of the nations, for us you are only august and great since the incarnation of God, since the Spirit of God has breathed upon us, and since the Son of God, in his car drawn by these two ardent coursers of God, Peter and Paul, has crossed the oceans of nations to come to us. Still more, because of the two great apostles of Christ, you are almost celestial, and Rome is the head of the Churches of the whole world, excepting only the prerogative of the place of divine resurrection."[1]

The generous fervour of that Irish race, justly proud of having never known the yoke of pagan Rome, and of having waited, before recognising her supremacy, till she had become the Rome of the apostles and martyrs, has never been expressed with more poetic energy.

[1] "Doleo enim, fateor, de infamia cathedræ S. Petri. . . . Ego enim ut amicus, ut discipulus, ut pedissequus vester, non ut alienus loquar: ideo libere eloquar nostris utpote magistris, ac spiritualis navis gubernatoribus, ac mysticis proretis dicens: Vigilate. . . . Noli despicere consiliolum alienigenæ. . . . Nullus hæreticus, nullus judæus, nullus schismaticus fuit. . . . Populus quem video, dum multos hæreticos sustinet, zelosus est, et cito tanquam grex pavidus turbatur. . . . Libertas paternæ consuetudinis, ut ita dicam, me audere ex parte facit. Non enim apud nos persona, sed ratio valet: amor pacis evangelicæ totum me dicere cogit. . . . In duobus illis ferventissimis Dei spiritus equis, Petro et Paulo . . . per mare gentium equitans, turbavit aquas multas . . . et supremus ille auriga currus illius qui est Christus. . . ad nos usque pervenit. Ex tunc vos magni estis et clari . . . et, si dici potest, propter geminos apostolos . . . vos prope cœlestes estis et Roma orbis terrarum caput est Ecclesiarum . . ."

But whilst the unwearied missionary had thus recommenced in Italy his career as a preacher and monastic founder, everything was changed among the Franks to whom he had devoted the half of his life. At the moment when the victorious persecutor of Columbanus seemed at the climax of his fortune, when he had joined the immense domains of the Austrasian kingdom to his own kingdom of Orleans and Burgundy, and when he had only the little state of Clotaire left to conquer, in order to reign over all Gaul and Frankish Germany, King Thierry suddenly died at the age of twenty-six. In vain did Brunehault essay to renew her reign in the name of her great-grandson, the young Sigebert, the eldest of Thierry's children: the leudes of Austrasia, who could never tolerate her haughty rule, and first among them the powerful chief Pepin, from whom the Carlovingian race proceeded, declared themselves against her. They leagued themselves on one side with the leudes of Burgundy, on the other with Clotaire and his Neustrians, and called the latter to reign over them. Brunehault and the four sons of Thierry were delivered up to him. He slaughtered the two eldest, and showed himself the worthy son of Fredegund by the atrocious sufferings which he inflicted upon her septuagenarian rival. Clotaire II., when he had become by all these crimes the sole king of the Franks and master of Austrasia and Burgundy as well as Neustria, remembered the pre-

Death of his persecutor, Thierry.

Clotaire II. recalls him to Austrasia.

diction of Columbanus, and desired to see once more the saint who had prophesied so truly. He charged Eustace, who had succeeded him as abbot at Luxeuil, to go and seek his spiritual father, and sent with him a deputation of nobles, as a security for the good intentions of the king. Columbanus received Eustace gladly, and kept his visitor with him for some time that he might make him thoroughly acquainted with the spirit of the rule, which he was to establish among the "monastic nation" at Luxeuil. But
He refuses, he declined to answer the call of Clotaire: we would fain believe that all the innocent blood which that king had spilt had something to do with this refusal; but there is nothing to prove it. The abbot confined himself to writing him a letter full of good advice, which, it must be allowed, he had great need of, and recommending to him his beloved abbey of Luxeuil, which Clotaire indeed overwhelmed with gifts and favours.[1]

As for Columbanus, he ended as he had begun, by seeking a solitude still more complete than that of the monastery which he had founded at Bobbio. He had found upon the opposite shore of Trebbia, in the side of a great rock, a cavern, which he transformed into a chapel, dedicated to the holy Virgin: there he passed his last days in fasting and prayer, returning to the monastery only for

[1] "Litteras castigationum affamine plenas Regi dirigit gratissimum munus. . . . Rex velut pignus fœderis viri Dei litteras ovans recepit."—JONAS, c. 61.

the Sundays and holidays. After his death this chapel was long venerated and much frequented by afflicted souls; and three centuries later, the annals of the monastery record, that those who had entered there sad and downcast had left it rejoicing, consoled by the sweet protection of Mary and of Columbanus.[1]

And dies. 21st November 615.

Such was the life of the illustrious founder of Luxeuil; less forgotten, we are bound to say, than others as worthy of recollection as himself, his memory has been brought to light anew in our own days, only to be made use of in a spirit hostile to the truth and authority of the Holy See.[2]

What, then, is there in this life which can justify the assumption which has attempted to raise the founder of Luxeuil into the chief of a political party, an enemy to royalty in his time, and, more than that, a schismatic, a contemner, or at least a rival, of the Papacy? Columbanus had neither the

He was neither the enemy of royalty nor of the Papacy.

[1] "Inter cæteras virtutes . . . hæc præcipue viguit, sicut ab antecessoribus nostris audivimus, quod si aliquis tristis illic adveniebat, si ibi aliquam morulam haberet, interventu Sanctæ Virginis supradictique viri lætus exinde revertebatur."—*Mirac. S. Columb. a Monach. Bobiens. Sæc.* x., ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii., pp. 37, 38. Another tradition attributes to him the discovery of a rare and delicate vegetable in the heart of the rocks which he incessantly travelled over, which does not reproduce itself every year, and which the abbot of Bobbio sent to the kings and princes, *pro benedictione S. Columbani.* "Nam legumen Pis, quod rustici *Herbiliam* vocant, ex adventu sui tempore per singulos annos sponte nascitur per illas rupes quas ipsi perambulavit, nullo serente et, quod nobis majus miraculum videtur, per scissuras petrarum ubi nullus humor adest."—*Mirac. S. Columb.*, c. 5.

[2] M. Gorini, in his *Défense de l'Eglise*, t. i., ch. x., has demolished the strange fancies of MM. Alexis de Saint-Priest, Michelet, &c., on the subject of the political and religious character of St Columbanus.

virtues nor the vices which make political men; he contended, not against royalty, but against a single king, and he waged this warfare solely in defence of the purity and dignity of Christian marriage. It is impossible to discover in his biography, so full of minute details, the least trace of a political tendency. Far from being an enemy to royalty, he was, without controversy, of all the great monks of his time, the one who had the most frequent and cordial intercourse with contemporary kings: with Clotaire, king of the Neustrians; Theodebert, king of the Austrasians; Agilulf, king of the Lombards. But he knew that virtue and truth are made for kings as well as for nations. History should admire in him monastic integrity struggling with the retrograde paganism of Merovingian polygamy, and the foreign missionary and solitary taking up at once, in face of the conquerors of Gaul, the freedom of the prophets of the ancient law against the crowned profligate: "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." This was the case, and nothing else; this is sufficient for his glory.

In respect to the Holy See, if some traces of the harsh independence of his race and the frank boldness of his character are to be found in his language—if he must be blamed for defending and imposing on others, with wearisome obstinacy, the local and special observances of his own country—if he made himself ridiculous by offering advice to

Pope Boniface IV. on a theological question, which he himself confesses he had not studied—it must be added that, even in his most vehement words, nothing implied the slightest doubt of the supreme authority of the Roman See. He says expressly that the pillar of the Church stands always firm at Rome; he expressly entitles the Pope the pastor of pastors, and *the prince of the chiefs*, whose duty it is to protect the army of the Lord in its perils, to organise everything, to regulate the order of war, to stimulate the captains, and, finally, to engage in the combat, marching himself at the head of the soldiers of God.[1]

This pretended Luther of the seventh century has then no right to any of those sympathies which have been recently bestowed on him. They have been addressed to the wrong individual. He was never the enemy of either kings or bishops. He was a formidable rival only to St Benedict. Neither in his writings nor his life is there anything to indicate that this rivalry was intentional: it sprang naturally from his independent mind, strongly individual and even eccentric, from the passionate attachment with which he inspired so large a number of disciples, from the missionary impulse which he evidently possessed, but above all, from the Rule which he believed it his duty to write for the use of the monastic nation which he had collected under his

His Rule.

[1] *Epist.* v., *ad Bonifacium.* "Pulcherrimo omnium totius Europæ Ecclesiarum capiti. . . . Pastorum pastori."

crosier.[1] He never mentions the Rule of St Benedict, though it was impossible that he could be ignorant of its existence, especially after he had gone to Lombardy.[2] But he desired to introduce into Gaul a durable monument of the religious spirit of his country, of that powerful impulse which had fertilised monastic Ireland, and formed those immense collections of monks where, if he is to be believed, such a discipline reigned, that as many as a thousand *abbots* recognised the laws of a single superior, and such a union that, in certain houses, since their first foundation, there had never been a single dispute.[3]

This Rule, at once shorter, less distinct, and more severe than that of St Benedict, agrees with it, notwithstanding, in its essential particulars, as the

[1] "His ergo in locis Monachorum plebibus constitutis. . . . Regulam quam tenerent Spiritu Sancto repletus condidit."

[2] Mabillon has fully acknowledged, in opposition to Yepes and Trithemius, that the Rule of Columbanus was not a simple modification of the Rule of Benedict; but it is impossible to admit the proof by which he assumes to establish that Columbanus, attracted to Italy by the fame of Benedict himself, had adopted the Rule of his predecessor and had introduced it at Bobbio. Contrary to all his habits, the prince of erudite Christians does not quote, in this instance, any contemporary text, or any fact, and limits himself to suppositions which neither agree with the life nor with the character of Columbanus.—Compare *Præfat. in Sæc.* ii., No. 14, and *in Sæc.* iv., n. 129-135.

[3] "Et cum tanta pluralitas eorum sit, ita ut mille abbates sub uno archimandrita esse referantur, nulla ibi a conditione cœnobii inter duos monachos rixa fuisse fertur visa."—*Regula* S. COLUMBANI, c. 7. The words *apud seniores nostros*, which are found at the beginning of this chapter, should be interpreted, not as referring to all Ireland, but to the monastery of Bangor, where Columbanus was a monk; but how is the thousand *abbots* in a single house to be explained, or how can the term *abbates* be regarded as synonymous with monks when the word *monachi* occurs in the same passage?

Benedictine Rule approaches, in many points, to the rules of the great solitaries of the East. It is not given to man, not even to the man of genius, to isolate himself from the efforts and experience of his predecessors, and no truly practical genius has attempted or even desired it. The first of the ten chapters which form the Rule of Columbanus treats of obedience; it was to be absolute and passive; there is no reservation, as in that of Benedict, of a judicious exercise of power on the part of the abbot, nor of the advisers by whom he was to be surrounded. The second imposes perpetual silence upon the monks, except for useful or necessary causes. The third reduces their food to the lowest rate possible: Benedict had granted meat to the weak and ailing, and a hemine of wine; Columbanus allowed only pulse, meal moistened with water, and a small loaf to all alike.[1] They were to eat only in the evening; fasting was to be a daily exercise, like work, prayer, or reading. Except Chapter VII., which establishes a very complicated and tediously prolonged order of services for the psalmody of the choir (seventy-five psalms and twenty-five anthems for the great feasts, thirty-six psalms and twelve anthems for the lesser), the other chapters treat of poverty, humility, chastity, discretion or prudence, and mortification, all virtues essential to the monastic condition, but

[1] "Cibus vilis et vespertinus . . . cum parvo panis paximatio." Fish, however, could not have been prohibited, since St Gall and his master were perpetually occupied in fishing.

which the author deals with rather as a preacher than a legislator. The tenth, and last, which is as long as all the others put together, forms, under the title of *Penitentiary*, a sort of criminal code, in which a new contrast may be remarked with the Benedictine code, in the extreme severity of the penalties prescribed for the least irregularities. The rigid discipline used in the monasteries of Scotland and Ireland is here manifest by the prodigal use of beating, which is reserved in the Benedictine code for incorrigible criminals, and prescribed in the Penitentiary for the most insignificant omissions. The number of strokes inflicted on delinquents varied from six to two hundred. This penalty, however, must have appeared much less hard and less humiliating at that period, even to the sons of the great, of whom so large a number were reckoned among the disciples of Columbanus, than it would seem to the most obscure Christian of our own time, since the *maximum* of two hundred blows was regarded as the equivalent of two days' fasting on bread and water, and the choice of these penalties was allotted to the monk who should have spoken, without the presence of a third person, to a woman. He who, on a journey, should have slept under the same roof with a woman, had to fast three days on bread and water.[1]

The *Penitentiary.*

[1] "Si quis monachus dormierit in una domo cum muliere, tres dies in pane et aqua; si nescivit quod non debet, uno die."—M. Gorini, op. cit., tom. i. p. 420, and others, have sufficiently exposed the absurd error committed by M. Michelet, in his *Histoire de France* (tom. i. p. 286),

These excessive severities discouraged no one. Columbanus saw an army of disciples collect around him, in the sanctuaries which he had founded, up to the last day of his life. They were more numerous and more illustrious than those of Benedict. Inspired by the spirit of this great saint, pervaded by the vigorous life which flowed from him, like him self-willed, dauntless, and unwearied, they gave to the monastic spirit the most powerful, rapid, and active impulse which it had yet received in the West. They extended it especially over those regions where that Franco-Germanic race, which hid in its skirts the future life of Christian civilisation, was laboriously forming itself. By their means the genius and memory of Columbanus hover over the whole of the seventh century, of all the centuries the most fertile and illustrious in the number and fervour of the monastic establishments which it produced. However, we shall see before the century was completed, the rule and institution of the great Irishman everywhere replaced by the spirit and laws of his immortal predecessor. Columbanus had more of that fascination which attracts for a day, or for a generation, than of that depth of genius which creates for ages.

Disciples of Columbanus.

Let us endeavour, then, if we can, to trace a brief picture of this monastic mission of the sons of

where he translates these words as follows: "For the monk who has transgressed with a woman, two days of bread and water."

Columbanus, at once so laborious and so productive, the fruits of which, if they must not be exclusively attributed to the glory or authority of the Celtic missionary, did not the less enrich for a thousand years and more the treasures of the Church.

His successors at Bobbio.

One word, in the first place, upon the Lombard abbey where Columbanus completed his career. His successor was Attalus, a noble Burgundian.

Attalus. 615-662.

He had first been a monk at Lerins, but, cast back by the decay of that renowned sanctuary, had been drawn to Luxeuil by the fame of Columbanus, and was named by the latter as his successor after his expulsion from Burgundy.[1] But he preferred to join him in exile. After the death of the founder, the new abbot was troubled by an insurrection of the Italian monks, who declared themselves incapable of bearing so many austerities and so hard a discipline. He permitted them to go; they went to seek another resting-place, some among the neighbouring mountains, some on the shores of the Mediterranean; several returned afterwards to the fold where Attalus continued the work of his master, struggling bravely against Arianism, which had found its last citadel among the conquering Lombards of northern Italy. He died at the foot of a crucifix which he had placed at the door of his cell that he might kiss the feet every time he went out or in, and was buried by the side of Columbanus.

Another stranger governed the monastery after

[1] *Epist. ad Fratres*, ubi supra.

him, Bertulph, a noble Austrasian, and near relative of the famous Arnoul, bishop of Metz, the earliest known ancestor of that Carlovingian race which was soon to unite Gaul and Italy under its laws. Bertulph was born a pagan; the example of his cousin had converted him and led him to Luxeuil, from whence he followed Attalus to Bobbio. He was scarcely elected when he had to struggle with the bishop of Tortona, who wished to bring the abbey under his jurisdiction, and attempted to arm himself with the authority of Ariowald, king of the Lombards. Bertulph. 627-640.

This Ariowald, son-in-law and successor of Agilulf, did not promise to be a very zealous protector of the Irish abbey. Before he became king he had met one day in the streets of Pavia one of the monks of Bobbio, charged by the abbot Attalus with a mission for the capital of the Lombards. Seeing him from a distance, he said, "There is one of Columbanus's monks, who refuse to salute us." After which he himself saluted the monk derisively. The latter, whose name was Blidulf, answered that he would have saluted him willingly had he been irreproachable in matters of faith, and took advantage of the occasion to preach him a sermon upon the equality of the three persons of the Trinity. Ariowald, furious at this, posted two of his satellites to await the monk's return, and beat him to death. Blidulf, who had supped with an orthodox citizen of Pavia, was attacked in a remote place by these assassins, The Arian Duke Ariowald and the orthodox monk of Bobbio.

who beat him unmercifully, and left him on the ground for dead. At the end of some hours he was found by his host lying in his blood, but he raised himself up, despite his cruel wounds, saying that he had never slept a sweeter sleep.[1] This wonder roused popular opinion in favour of the monks of Bobbio, and their orthodox doctrine. Ariowald, confused and penitent, sent to the abbey to ask pardon, and offered gifts, which were refused. But we must believe that this adventure had a salutary impression on his soul; for after his accession to the throne, though still an Arian, he not only abstained from persecuting the orthodox monastery, but even from condemning it in its struggles with the bishop. "It is not my part," he said, "to know these priestly contentions: let them be judged by their synods."[2]

Bertulph, however, went to Rome to appeal to Pope Honorius, made him acquainted with the rule, and the customs followed in the new foundation, obtained his sovereign approbation, and returned furnished with a privilege which exempted from episcopal jurisdiction the monastery in which Columbanus had completed his course.[3]

[1] "Ex Columbani monachis iste est, qui nobis salutantibus denegant apta respondere. Cumque jam haud procul abesset, deridens salutem præmisit. . . . Percussus cerebro et omni compage corporis collisus, magnis fustium ictibus ac sudibus pulsatus. . . . Nihil ei respondit unquam suavius accessisse nec somnum dulciorem habuisse testatur."—JONAS, *Vita S. Bertulfi*, c. 14, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii.

[2] "Non meum est sacerdotum causas discernere quas synodalis examinatio ad purum decet adducere."—JONAS, *Vita S. Bertulfi*, c. 5.

[3] Jonas of Susa, a monk at Bobbio, as we have already said, has

Whilst the Franks of Burgundy and Austrasia, called to follow the great Irish monk into Lombardy, formed in a gorge of the Apennines a centre of energetic reaction against Arian heresy, against the effeminacy of the Italian monks, and the efforts of that paganism which still existed among the peasants,[1] the Irish monks, who had been expelled from Luxeuil with their illustrious compatriot, but who had followed him only to the foot of the Alps, sowed the seed amid the semi-pagan populations of Eastern Helvetia and of Rhætia. One of them, Sigisbert, separated from his master at the foot of the hill which has since been called St Gothard, and crossing the glaciers and peaks of Crispalt, directing his steps to the East, arrived at the source of the Rhine, and from thence descended into a vast solitude, where he built a cell of branches near a fountain. The few inhabitants of these wild regions, who were still idolaters, surrounded him, admired him, and listened to him; but when he attempted to cut down the sacred oak, the object of their traditional worship, one of the pagans aimed an axe at his head. The sign of the cross disarmed this assailant: the work of conversion pro-

Disciples of Columbanus in Helvetia.

Sigisbert founds Disentis, near the source of the Rhine.

written, besides the biography of St Columbanus, those of his two successors, and has dedicated them to Bobolène, fourth abbot of Bobbio, and of Frankish origin, like his predecessors. The names of the monks whom Jonas cites in his narrative seem to indicate the same Frankish origin: Mérovée, Blidulph, Theodald, Baudachaire.

[1] See the adventure of Mérovée the monk, who, going from Bobbio to Tortona, attempted to destroy a rustic temple (*fanum quoddam ex arboribus consitum*) which he found on the shores of the Serivia, and was beaten and thrown into the water by the *fani cultores*.—JONAS, lib. c. 16.

ceeded painfully, but with the support of a neighbouring noble, who became a Christian and then a monk under the teachings of the Irish missionary, and who endowed with all his possessions the newborn monastery, which still exists under the name of Dissentis.[1] Thus was won and sanctified, from its very source, that Rhine whose waters were to bathe so many illustrious monastic sanctuaries.

St Gall. Not far from the spot where the Rhine falls into Lake Constance, and a little to the south of the lake, Gall, cured of his fever, but deeply saddened by the departure of his master, chose a retreat which his name was to make immortal. A deacon, much given to hunting and fishing, pointed out to him a wild solitude enclosed within wooded heights, with abundant streams, but inhabited by bears, boars, and wolves. "If the Lord is with us, who can be against us?" said Gall; and he set out with some provisions in his wallet, and a small net for fishing. Towards evening they arrived at the spot where the torrent of Steinach hollows a bed for itself in the rocks. As he walked on, praying, his foot caught in the brushwood and he fell. The deacon ran to raise him up. "No," said Gall: "here is my chosen habitation; here is my resting-place for ever." There he arranged two hazel-boughs into the form of a cross, attached to it the

[1] BUCELINUS, *Martyrol. Bened. II. Jul.*: MABILLON, *Ann. Bened.*, lib. xi. c. 20. The abbey of Dissentis, burned by the French in 1799, has since been rebuilt.

relics which he carried round his neck, and passed the night in prayer. Before his devotions were concluded, a bear descended from the mountain to collect the remains of the traveller's meal. Gall threw him a loaf, and said to him, "In the name of Christ, withdraw from this valley; the neighbouring mountains shall be common to us and thee, but on condition that thou shalt do no more harm either to man or beast." The next day the deacon went to fish in the torrent, and, as he threw his net, two demons appeared to him under the form of two naked women about to bathe, who threw stones at him, and accused him of having led into the desert the cruel man who had always overcome them. Gall, when he came, exorcised these phantoms; they fled, ascending the course of the torrent, and could be heard on the mountain, weeping and crying as with the voices of women. "Where shall we go? this stranger hunts us from the midst of men, and even from the depths of the desert;" while other voices asked, "whether the Christian was still there, and if he would not soon depart."[1]

Demons again.

These poetic traditions, transmitted from lip to lip among the first Christians of Helvetia, gave a

[1] OZANAM, *Etudes Germaniques*, ii. 123; RETTBERG, *Kirchengeschichte*, ii. 40-43; *Vita S. Galli*, ap. PERTZ, *Monumenta*, ii. 5. "Præcipio tibi, bestia, in nomine Domini. Tu induxisti virum istum in hunc eremum, virum iniquum et invidia plenum. . . . Præcipio vobis, phantasmata. . . . Heu! quid faciemus, aut quo pergemus?"—WALAFRID. STRABO, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 224.

natural picture of the effect produced upon the souls of the inhabitants by the double struggle of the Irish missionaries against the gods of paganism and the forces of nature. The entire life of the celebrated apostle of German Switzerland is thus taken possession of by legends, which have interwoven with it many tales, the charm of which detains us in spite of ourselves. One of these shows him to us appealed to by the same Duke of Alamannia who wished to expel Columbanus and his companions out of his province, but who now claimed the help of the holy solitary whose fame already extended afar, to heal his daughter, possessed by a devil, who resisted all exorcisms, crying out that he would yield only to Gall, who had already banished him and his fellows from the banks of the Lakes of Zurich and Constance. Gall refused to go, and disappeared into the mountains of Rhætia; he was found there in a cavern, and led to the ducal castle at Uberlingen. He found the young princess lying, as if dead, upon the knees of her mother, her eyes shut, and her mouth open. He knelt down by her side, and, after a fervent prayer, commanded the demon to come out of her. The young girl opened her eyes, and the demon, speaking by her voice, said, before it obeyed him, "Art thou, then, that Gall who hast already chased me away everywhere? Ingrate! it is to avenge thee that I have entered into the daughter of thy persecutor, and thou comest now to expel me again!" When

The Princess Friedeburga.

the cure was complete, Gall advised the daughter of the duke to consecrate her virginity to God, who had delivered her. But this princess, whose name was Friedeburga (castle of peace), and who was, like all princesses canonised by legends, of singular beauty, had been affianced to Sigebert, the eldest son of Thierry II., who had just succeeded his father, and was soon to perish under the sword of Clotaire II. She was sent to him to Metz. When he learned how and by whom she had been cured, the young prince made a gift and concession to the Irish saint of all the territory which he should desire in the public or royal possessions between the Rhætian Alps and the Lake of Constance. Then he wished to proceed with his marriage. Friedeburga asked some days' respite to recover her strength; she took advantage of this to flee to a church dedicated to St Stephen. There she covered herself with a nun's veil, and, taking hold of the corner of the altar, prayed to the saint who had first shed his blood for Christ to help her. The young king, when he was told of this, came to the church with the nuptial robe and crown which had been intended for his bride. On seeing him, she held closer and closer to the altar. But he reassured her, and said, "I come here only to do thy will." He commanded the priests to bring her from the altar to him; when she approached, he had her clothed in the nuptial robe, and placed the crown over her veil. Then, after looking at her for some time, he said

Offered to God by her bridegroom.

to her, "Such as thou art there, adorned for my bridal, I yield thee to the bridegroom whom thou preferrest to me—to my Lord Jesus Christ." Then taking her hand, he placed her at the altar, and left the church, to mourn in secret over his lost love.[1]

Origin of the abbey of St Gall.

However, the zealous solitary whose influence inspired from afar these touching and generous sacrifices, refused the bishopric of Constance, which the Duke of Alamannia would have conferred upon him, alleging as his reason the kind of interdict which his master had pronounced at the moment of separation, and returned into his dear solitude, which ten or twelve native Christians soon shared with him.[2] He selected one of these to send across the Alps to make inquiries concerning the fate of Columbanus, who brought back from Bobbio

[1] "Singulari pulchritudine fulgens. . . . In sinu matris, oculis clausis, ore inhianti. . . . Tu ne Gallus. . . . Ego plane ob ultionem injuriæ quâm Dux iste tibi et sociis tuis irrogavit filiam ipsius invasi, et sic ejicis me. . . . Sicut mihi fuisti præparata cum ornamentis, sic te dabo ad sponsam Domino meo J. C. . . . Deinde ecclesiæ limen excedens lacrymis absconditum patefecit amorem."—WALAFR. STRABO, c. 15-21. "Ob quod fertur egressus flere."—ANON. *VII. Sæc.* All these facts are also related in the anonymous life published by Pertz in the seventh century, and reproduced by the new Bollandists (t. vii. Octobris, p. 887), who maintain the authenticity of the essential part of this narration against the criticisms of most modern historians. Compare MABILLON, ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 42, and RETTBERG, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, t. ii. p. 42. The most serious objection arises from the age of Sigebert, the eldest of the children, whom Columbanus had refused to bless, and who could scarcely be more than thirteen years old in 613, the year of the death of his father, Thierry, himself only twenty-six years of age. In an interesting letter, published by M. Dantier, in his *Rapport sur la Correspondance Inédite des Bénédictins* (1857, p. 198), Mabillon, while admitting the existence and high birth of Sigebert, disputes his being the son of Thierry and king of the Franks.

[2] "Reversurus ad dilectæ solitudinis aulam."—WAL. STRABO, c. 19.

the news of his death, and the crosier of the illustrious exile, which he had bequeathed to his compatriot and friend as a sign of absolution. Ten years later, Gall received a deputation of six monks, Irish like himself, from Luxeuil, who came in the name of the community to pray his acceptance of the government of the great abbey, vacant by the death of Eustace. But he again refused to leave that asylum which he had formed for himself, and where he continued to preach and edify the surrounding population, receiving disciples and visitors in always increasing numbers, whom he supported by the produce of his fishing. When he died, the entire country of the Alamans had become a Christian province, and around his cell were already collected the rudiments of the great monastery which, under the same name of St Gall, was to become one of the most celebrated schools of Christendom, and one of the principal centres of intellectual life in the Germanic world.

625.

Gall refuses to become abbot of Luxeuil.

He died. 16th October 646.[1]

Several generations passed before St Gall could accomplish its glorious destinies, whilst the principal foundation of Columbanus immediately attained the climax of its greatness and popularity. No monastery of the West had yet shone with so much lustre, or attracted so many disciples, as Luxeuil, since the exile of its illustrious founder fixed upon it the attention and sympathy of Chris-

Influence and prosperity of Luxeuil.

[1] This is the date given by Mabillon, and confirmed by Rettberg, ii. 46-48. The new Bollandists, p. 881, prefer that of 627.

tian Gaul. It may be remembered that, at the time of Columbanus's exile, none of his monks who were not Irish were allowed to follow him. One of these, named Eustace, born of a noble family in Burgundy, and who had been a soldier before entering Luxeuil, had to be torn from the arms of his spiritual father. After a time, he followed him to Bregenz, from whence he returned to Luxeuil to govern the community deprived of its natural head, and to dispute possession with the secular persons who invaded it on all sides, and who had even established their shepherds in the enclosure inhabited by the monks. Eustace was intrusted by Clotaire II., when he became sole master of the three Frank kingdoms, with the mission of recalling Columbanus, as we have already seen. Upon the refusal of the latter, Eustace remained at the head of the great abbey, which attracted an increasing number of monks, and the veneration of the nations. However, the missionary spirit and desire to preach exercised an overwhelming influence over Eustace as over all the disciples of the great Irish missionary. The bishops, assembled in the Council of Bonneuil-sur-Marne by Clotaire II., nominated him to preach the faith to unconverted nations. He began with the Varasques, who inhabited, not far from Luxeuil, the banks of the Doubs, near Baume, some of whom were still idolaters, and worshipped the genii of the woods, the *fauns* and dryads of classic antiquity, whilst the others had

St Eustace second abbot of Luxeuil. 610-625.

616.

His mission among the Varasques,

fallen victims to heresy. He afterwards travelled beyond the countries which Columbanus had visited, to the extremity of northern Gaul, among the Boïens or Bavarians.[1] His mission was not without success; but Luxeuil, which could not remain thus without a head, soon recalled him.

And among the Boïens.

During the ten years of his rule, a worthy successor of Columbanus, he succeeded in securing the energetic support of the Frank nobility, as well as the favour of Clotaire II. Under his active and intelligent administration, the abbey founded by St Columbanus attained its highest point of splendour, and was recognised as the monastic capital of all the countries under Frank government. The other monasteries, into which laxness and the secular spirit had but too rapidly found their way, yielded one after another to the happy influence of Luxeuil, and gradually renewed themselves by its example.[2]

Luxeuil became the monastic capital of the Gauls.

[1] "Warascos . . . qui agrestium fanis decepti, quos vulgi Faunos vocant."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 9, ap. ACT. SS. O. B., t. ii. p. 306. Compare JONAS, *Vita S. Eustasii; Vita S. Salabergæ;* RETTBERG, t. ii. 188; and NIEDERMAYER, *Das Monchthüm in Bajuwarien*, 1859, p. 41. This last author thinks himself entitled to affirm, on the authority of P. Meichelbeck, that St Eustace adopted from that time the Benedictine rule. But Meichelbeck, in the only part of his works in which he treats this question (*Chronic. Benedicto-Buranum*, Prolog., p. 75, Monachii, 1751), gives no proof, nor any reason but the insufficient arguments of Mabillon. See above, page 448, note 2.

[2] "Properabat ad monasteria, maximeque Lussedium, quod erat eo tempore cunctis eminentius atque districtius. Neque enim tam crebra adhuc erant in Galliis monasteria: et sicubi essent, non sub regulari quidem disciplina, sed prorsus erant in malitia fermenti veteris sæcularia. Præter Lussedium ergo, quod solum, ut dictum est, districtionem regulæ solerter tenebat, Solemniacense monasterium in partibus occiduis hujus religionis extitet caput. Ex quo demum multi sumpserunt et initium

Abbots animated by sincere zeal did not hesitate to draw from that new fountain the strength and light with which they found themselves unprovided in their ancient sanctuaries. Among them was Conon, the abbot of the famous monastery of Lerins, which had been, two centuries before, the most illustrious community of the West, but which had since come through all the vicissitudes of a slow decay.

The great abbey of Sequania became thus a nursery of bishops and abbots—preachers and reformers for the whole Church of these vast countries, and principally for the two kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy. It owed this preponderating influence not only to the monastic regularity which was severely observed there, but especially to the flourishing school established by Columbanus, which he had intrusted, while he remained there, to the special charge of Eustace, and whose progress the latter, when he himself became abbot, promoted with unwearied zeal. Luxeuil was the most celebrated school of Christendom during the seventh century, and the most frequented. The monks and clerks of other monasteries, and, more numerous still, the children of the noblest Frank and Burgundian races, crowded to it. Lyons, Autun, Langres, and Strasbourg, the most famous

And the first school of Christendom.

et exemplum, adeo ut nunc quoque propitia divinitate, innumera per omnem Franciam et Galliam habeantur sub regulari disciplina, alma utriusque sexus cœnobia."—AUDOENUS, *Vita S. Eligii*, lib. i. c. 21. (He wrote from 660 to 680.)

cities of Gaul, sent their youth thither. The fathers came to study with their children; some aspiring to the honour of counting themselves one day among the sons of St Columbanus; others to re-enter into secular life with the credit of having drawn their knowledge of divine and human learning from so famous a seat of learning. As it always happens, when a great centre of Christian virtues is formed in the world, light and life shine forth from it, and brighten all around with irresistible energy.[1]

From the banks of the Lake of Geneva to the coast of the North Sea, every year saw the rise of some monastery peopled and founded by the children of Luxeuil, whilst the episcopal cities sought as bishops men trained to the government of souls by the regenerating influence of this great monastery. Besançon, Noyon, Laon, Verdun, and the diocesan capitals of the country of the Rauraques and Morins, were so fortunate as to obtain such bishops almost at the same time. Their good

Bishops and saints issued from Luxeuil.

[1] "Cum omnium Francorum honore fulciretur."—*Vita S. Eustasii*, c. 6. "Luxovium omnium caput Burgundiæ monasteriorum et Franciæ."—*Gallia Christian. Vet.*, ap. D. PITRA, 298. "Pene singulare tam in religionis apice quam in perfectione doctrinæ."—*Vita S. Frodoberti*, c. 5. ACT. SS. O. B., t. ii. 601.

"Viri religiosi illuc undecumque confluunt, se suosque liberos plurimi certatim imbuendos offerunt, illud ante omnia ducentes per maximum, si post longævam probantis injuriæ tolerantiam quodammodo admitti mereantur in congregationem. Jam vero quis locus vel civitas non gaudeat ex beati viri Columbani disciplina rectorem habere, pontificem vel abbatem, cum constet ex hujus virtute magisterii pene totum Francorum orbem decretis regularibus fuisse primum decenter ornatum?"—ADSON, *Vita S. Bercharii*, c. 6, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 800.

fortune was envied by all, and all vied in seeking superiors whom they concluded beforehand to be saints.[1] And it was with reason; for perhaps so great a number of men, honoured by the Church after their death with public worship, has never been collected on one point, or into so short a space as twenty years.[2]

Attempt of Agrestin against the institute of Columbanus.

This remarkable prosperity was threatened with a sudden interruption by means of the intrigues of a false brother who had stolen into the monastic family of Columbanus. A man named Agrestin, who had been notary or secretary to King Thierry, the persecutor of Columbanus, came one day to give himself and all his property to Luxeuil. Being admitted among the monks, he soon showed a desire to go, like Eustace, to preach the faith to the pagans.

[1] We may mention, among the bishops whose names will not recur again, Hermenfried of Verdun, son of one of the principal lords of Alsatia, at one time a soldier and lieutenant of King Thierry of Burgundy. He was touched by grace in the middle of a battle, and became a monk under Columbanus about 605. He was taken from Luxeuil to be made bishop of Verdun about 609. Persecuted, like his spiritual master, by Brunehault, and sharing afterwards in all the misfortunes of his diocese, he died of grief, in 621, at sight of the calamities of his people.

[2] *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, by the professors of the College of St François Xavier, tome ii. p. 492. The second volume of this excellent collection is exclusively devoted to the saints of Luxeuil, and it is the best work that can be read on this subject. We borrow from it the following enumeration of the saints sprung from the Abbey of Luxeuil alone:—

Columbanus.	Valery.	Donatus.
Columbanus the younger.	Waldolenus.	Attalus.
Desle.	Sigisbert.	Léobard.
Lua.	Eustace.	Bobolenus.
Gall.	Cagnoald.	Ursicin.
Ragnacarius.	Hermenfried.	Waldalenus.
Acharius.	Agilus.	Colombin.

In vain the abbot, who could see no evangelical quality in him, attempted to restrain that false zeal. He was obliged to let him go. Agrestin followed the footsteps of Eustace into Bavaria, but made nothing of it, and passed from thence into Istria and Lombardy, where he embraced the schism of the Three Chapters, which had already put Columbanus in danger of compromising himself with the Holy See. But the authority of the sovereign Pontiff had not been slow in exercising its legitimate influence upon the Italian disciples of the great Irish monk: and when Agrestin attempted to involve the second abbot of Bobbio, Attalus, in the schism, he was so badly received that he imagined himself entitled to address the successor of Columbanus in an epistle full of invectives and calumnies. He returned from thence to Luxeuil, where he tried to corrupt his former brethren. Eustace then remembered what the exiled Columbanus had written to them, in his letter from Nantes, just before his embarkation: "If there is one among you who holds different sentiments from the others, send him away;"[1] and he commanded Agrestin to leave the community. To avenge himself, the schismatic began to snarl, says the contemporary annalist, hawking here and there injurious imputations against that same rule of St Columbanus which he himself had professed, and the success of which

[1] "Tantum inter vos non sit qui unum non sit . . . quicumque sint rebelles foras exeant."—*Epist. ad Fratres.*

could not fail to have excited some jealousy and hostility. One of the bishops, Abellinus of Geneva, listened to his denunciations, and exerted himself to make the neighbouring prelates share his dislike. King Clotaire, who heard of it, and who was always full of solicitude for Luxeuil, assembled most of the bishops of the kingdom of Burgundy in council at Macon. To this council Eustace was called, and the accuser invited to state his complaints against the rule of Luxeuil. He says nothing of the celebration of Easter according to the Irish custom, which proves that Columbanus or his disciples had finally given up that assumption; nor were the severe penalties of the Penitentiary touched upon. All his complaints were directed against certain insignificant peculiarities, which he called superfluous, contrary to the canons, or showing a personal spirit. "I have discovered," said he, "that Columbanus has established usages which are not those of the whole Church." And thereupon he accused his former brethren, as with so many heresies, of making the sign of the cross upon their spoons, when eating; of asking a blessing in entering or leaving any monastic building; and of multiplying prayers at mass. He insisted especially against the Irish tonsure, which Columbanus had introduced into France, and which consisted solely in shaving the front of the head from one ear to the other, without touching the hair of the back part, while the Greeks shaved the entire head, and the

Council of Mâcon. 624.

The Irish tonsure.

Romans only the crown, leaving the hair in the form of a crown round the lower part of the head. This last custom, as is well known, became the prevalent one in all the religious orders of the West.[1]

Eustace had no difficulty in justifying the customs of Luxeuil, and in discomfiting the violence of his accuser. But as Agrestin always returned to the charge, the abbot said to him: "In presence of these bishops, I, the disciple and successor of him whose institute thou condemnest, cite thee to appear with him, within a year, at the tribunal of God, to plead thy cause against him, and to learn and know the justice of Him whose servant thou hast attempted to calumniate." The solemnity of this appeal had an effect even upon the prelates

[1] "Se huc illucque vertit. . . . Canino dente garriens ac veluti cœnosa sus. . . . Ait superflua quædam et canonicæ institutioni aliena. . . . Cochleam quam lamberent crebro crucis signo signari. . . . Prorupit dicens se scire Columbanum a cæterorum more desciscere."—JONAS, *Vita S. Eustas.*, c. 9-10. The tonsure had been recognised, from apostolic times, as symbolical of the religious vow, as is proved by the sacred text relative to the Jew Aquila, who was Paul's host at Corinth: "Navigavit in Syriam et cum eo Priscilla et Aquila, qui *sibi totonderat* in Cenchris caput: habebat enim votum."—ACT. xviii. 18. Some years after the Synod of Mâcon, the Council of Toledo, in 633, regulated the form of the tonsure, and of that circle of short hair round the head, called *corona clericalis*. It appears that the nuns were not always constrained to sacrifice their long hair, like the monks. This is shown in the curious anecdote related by Hildegaire, bishop of Meaux in the ninth century, in the life of his predecessor, St Faron. The holy bishop, wishing to see his wife again, from whom he had been obliged to separate in order to become a bishop, and who lived as a nun in a villa of his patrimony, she, for fear of exciting a culpable regret in the mind of her husband, "se totondit totam cæsariem capitis, in quo consistebat ornamentum pulchrius corporis." The precaution succeeded so well, that Faron, seeing her thus shaven, "amarissimo tædio exhorruit."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 592.

who leant to Agrestin's side: they urged him to be reconciled to his former abbot, and the latter, who was gentleness itself, consented to give him the kiss of peace. But this goodness did not benefit Agrestin. Hopeless of succeeding at Luxeuil itself, he sowed revolt and calumny in the other monasteries which had proceeded, like Luxeuil, from the colonising genius of Columbanus, at Remiremont and Faremoutier. But, before the end of the year, he was slain with a blow of an axe by a slave, whose wife, it is believed, he had intended to dishonour.[1]

The bishops of the Council of Mâcon, and the Bishop of Geneva above all others, became from that time the champions and protectors of the institute of St Columbanus. Like them, many other prelates of Gaul distinguished themselves by their eagerness in founding or protecting new monasteries destined to extend or practise the Irish rule. The glory of Columbanus and Luxeuil came forth uninjured, and indeed increased, from this trial. However, although no contemporary document expressly says as much, it is evident that from that time the heads of the institution perceived the necessity of softening the intense individuality of their founder's spirit. Through the passionate and exaggerated accusations of Agrestin, their eyes were opened to the dangers of isolation, even in what were apparently unimportant details of observance and regular discipline. They perceived,

[1] JONAS, c. 12-16.

with profound Christian sagacity, that they must give up the thought of extending the Rule of their master everywhere, and as the only monastic code. They knew that by their side a Rule more ancient than their own, and fortified by the formal approbation of the Roman Pontiff, lived and flourished, without brilliant success it is true, up to that time, but not without fruit or honour. By what means was the Abbey of Luxeuil brought into contact with the Rule of St Benedict? By what argument did this powerful and celebrated house open her doors to another glory and authority than that of her founder? There is no answer to this question:[1] but it is certain that, under the successor of Eustace, who died a year after the Council of Mâcon, and after that time, in the numerous foundations of which we have still to speak, the two Rules almost always appear together, as the joint bases of communities originated by the disciples of

The Benedictine Rule is associated with the institute of Columbanus.

[1] There is nothing to authorise the account of Orderic Vital, who, five centuries subsequent to the foundation of Luxeuil, asserts that St Maur—who died in 584—was known by the disciples of St Columbanus, who died in 615; but it will gratify our readers to quote here a passage from that historian, who thus explains the effect produced on monastic posterity by the fusion of the two institutions:—"Ipsi (the disciples of Columbanus) reor, B. Maurum ejusque socios et discipulos noverunt, utpote vicini, et ab ipsis sicut ab aliis scripta doctorum, ædificationis causa, *sancti normam suscepere Benedicti, ita tamen ut non abhorrerent sui statuta magistri*, almi videlicet Columbani. Ab *ipso* siquidem modum divinæ servitutis et ordinem didicerunt, et formam orationum; . . . *nigredinem vestium* aliasque observationes sumpserunt quas pro religione et honestate ipsius tenuerunt, et *sequaces* eorum *usque in hodiernum* reverenter observare appetunt."—ORDERIC VITAL, *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. viii. c. 27.

Columbanus.[1] The monastic republic of Gaul, which apparently ought to have recognised only one dictator, henceforth was to have two consuls, like the Roman republic of old.

The soldier Walbert becomes the third abbot of Luxeuil. 625-665.

The successor of Eustace was Walbert, also a pupil and companion of Columbanus. Born of Sicambrian race, of a noble and wealthy family, he had been remarked for his bravery in war, before he enrolled himself in the army of the Irish missionary. But the attraction of the cloister overcame the warlike inclinations of the Frank. When his mind was made up, he went to Luxeuil, taking with him not only a gift of all his vast domains, but also his military dress, of which he would only divest himself in the monastery itself: he offered also the arms with which he had won his fame, which were suspended from the arches of the church, and remained there during the course of ages, as a monument of the noblest victory which a man can achieve here below.[2] He obtained permission from Eustace to live alone in the hollow of a rock, near a fountain in the midst of the wood, three miles from the abbey. It was here that, after the death of Colum-

[1] MABILLON, *Præf. in II. Sæc.*, c. 15; *Præf. in IV. Sæc.*, c. 126, 127.

[2] "Vir egregius ex genere Sicambrorum."—*Vita S. German. Grandiv.*, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 491. "Cujus annos adolescentiæ in armis tradunt excellentissime floruisse . . . inclyta prosapia clarissimus . . . hominibus et rerum dignitate juxta natales suos distissimus . . . miles optimus inter fasces constitutus et arma . . . armisque depositis quæ usque hodie (in the time of Adson, about 950) in testimonium sacræ militiæ ejus in eo loco habentur."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. iv. p. 411. The hermitage in which St Walbert passed the first years of his conversion is still to be seen at some distance from Luxeuil. He died in 665.

banus's first successor Eustace, and the refusal of Gall to accept the office, the monks of Luxeuil sought Walbert to make him their third abbot. He ruled 625-665. them for forty years with honour and success. We shall see hereafter the sympathy which existed between Walbert and Bathild, the holy regent of the three Frank kingdoms, and the power he was supposed to have over her. His name remains, in the surrounding countries, the most popular of all those who have done honour to the great abbey of Sequania. He maintained discipline and encouraged profound study, while he increased the property of the community, by his own donations in the first place, and then by those which the reputation of the monastery attracted from all sides.

To the temporal independence thus secured, was soon added a sort of spiritual independence eagerly sought by all the great monasteries, and which they spared no pains in soliciting either from the popes or provincial councils. Their object was to protect themselves, by a solemn privilege, from the vexatious abuses of authority, which the diocesan bishop, by right of his spiritual authority, could subject them to, by taking up his abode among them against their will, with a numerous retinue, by making them pay a very high price for the holy chrism and the ordination of their brethren, or, above all, by obstructing the freedom of their elections. Lerins had obtained this privilege from the Council of Arles in 451, and Agaune from the

Council of Chalon in 579. Luxeuil could not fail to feel the importance of the same rights and the same necessities.

Exemption accorded by Pope John IV. 641.

Under the abbacy of Walbert, and upon a petition made in the name of King Clovis II., then a minor, Pope John IV. accorded the privilege of exemption from episcopal authority "to the monastery of St Peter, founded," says the pontifical act, "by the venerable Columbanus, a Scot, who came a stranger, but fervent in zeal and sanctity in the kingdom of the Franks. . . . If, which God forbid, the monks of the said monastery should become lukewarm in the love of God and observance of the institutes of their father, they shall be punished by the abbot, that is, by the father of the monastery; and if he himself should fall into indifference, and contempt of the paternal rule, the Holy See shall provide for that."[1]

Six hundred monks formed, under the cross of

[1] Mabillon found a fragment of the text of this bull in the archives of Montierender: he has completed it from the diplomas of the subsequent popes, and published it in his *Annal. Bened.*, t. xiii. No. 11, and *Append.*, No. 18. The bull of John IV. has been disputed by Brequigny, in his *Diplomata, Chartæ*, &c., 1791, folio, p. 186-188. Admitting that it may be interpolated, it is certain that the exemption granted to Luxeuil was, in fact, neither less solemn nor less extensive than those of Lerins and Agaune. It is instanced in the same terms in the *Formulas* of Marculph relative to exemptions (book 1, tit. i.), and in all the privileges granted in the seventh century, such as those of St Denys, Corbie, &c. Mabillon himself admits that the bull of Pope John IV. can only be a confirmation of previous exemptions, and this is the most probable supposition, seeing that mention had been already made of the privilege of Luxeuil in the charter granted to Rebais by Dagobert I. in 634. We may be permitted to decline any discussion of the document, entirely foreign to the question, by which a lamented

Walbert, the permanent garrison of this monastic citadel, from whence missionaries, solitary or in parties, issued daily to found new monastic colonies at a distance. There even came a time when the throng of monks seeking entrance seems to have embarrassed Walbert, and when he sought means of placing them elsewhere and at a distance. For under him, even more than under his predecessors, the productiveness of Luxeuil became prodigious. It was at this period particularly, as says a contemporary, that, throughout the whole of Gaul, in the castles and cities, in plains and in deserts, armies of monks and colonies of nuns abounded everywhere, carrying with them the glory and the laws of Benedict and Columbanus.[1]

Extension of the institution of Luxeuil under Walbert.

It would be a hard task to trace the faithful picture of that monastic colonisation of Gaul, which had, during the whole of the seventh century, its centre in Luxeuil. A single glance must suffice here. To find our way through this labyrinth, it is necessary to survey rapidly the principal pro-

Colonies of Luxeuil in Gaul.

and distinguished, but paradoxical writer, the Count Alexis de Saint-Priest, in his *Histoire de la Royauté*, t. ii. p. 157, supposed himself able to prove his theory of the imaginary opposition between Rome and Luxeuil.

[1] "Cernens . . . Waldebertus certatim undique catervas monachorum coadunari, cœpit de tam plurima multitudine si forte ubi ubi posset loca uberrima ubi de suis monachis ad habitandum adunare exquirere." —*Vita S. Germ. Grandiv.*, c. 8. "Walberti tempore per Galliarum provincias agmina monachorum et sacrarum virginum examina non solum per agros, villas, vicosque atque castella, verum etiam per eremi vastitatem ex regula duntaxat Benedicti et Columbani pullulare cœperunt, cum ante illud tempus vix pauca illis reperirentur locis."—*Vita S. Salabergæ*, ap. ACT. SS. ORD. BENED. sæc. ii. t. ii. p. 407.

vinces which received, one after another, the benefits of this pacific conquest. This rapid course will permit us to breathe the perfume of some of those flowers of exquisite charity and sweet humbleness, which blossomed amid the savage violence and brutal cruelty of which Christendom was then the theatre. It will show us also how many obstacles and dangers these men of peace and prayer had to surmount, and how, subdued under the yoke of the monastic rule, in solitude or in the community of the cloister, the Franks who gave themselves to God under the laws of Columbanus or Benedict, allowed neither the generous courage nor the proud independence of their fathers to degenerate in them; how they displayed, above all, in every encounter, that individual energy and initiative force which was characteristic of the Germanic races, and which alone could regenerate the West, so long sunk under the ignoble burden of Roman decrepitude.

And first in the two Burgundies.

But before studying the action of Columbanus and his followers upon the Frank and Burgundian nobility at a distance, we find, not far from Luxeuil, a great foundation due to one of those Irish monks who were the faithful companions of him who, four centuries after his death, was still called "the king of monks and conductor of the chariot of God." It will be recollected that, at his expulsion from Luxeuil, the Irish monks alone were permitted to follow him. One of them, then advanced in years, and believed to have been a brother of St Gall,

whose Celtic name has disappeared under the Latin appellation of Deicolus or Desle (servant of God), when he had reached with Columbanus a place covered with brushwood, some miles distant from Luxeuil, upon the road to Besançon, felt his limbs fail, and perceived that he could go no farther. Throwing himself at the feet of his abbot, he asked and obtained permission, with the blessing of Columbanus, to accomplish his pilgrimage in this desert. After a tearful separation, when he found himself alone, he set out to find a place of rest in the forest. Searching through the thicket, he met a flock of swine, the herdsman of which was thunderstruck at sight of this stranger of great height, and clad in a costume unknown to him. "Who are you?" asked the swineherd, "whence come you? what seek you? what are you doing in this wild country without guide or companion?" "Be not afraid, my brother," said the old Irishman, "I am a traveller and a monk; and I beg you for charity to show me hereabouts a place where a man may live." The swineherd answered him, that in this neighbourhood the only place he knew was marshy, but still habitable, because of the abundance of water, and belonged to a powerful vassal called Werfair. He refused, however, to guide him to it, lest his flock should stray in his absence; but Desle insisted, and said, with that daring gaiety which we still find among the Irish, "If thou do me this little favour, I answer for it that thou shalt not lose the very least of thy herd;

The old Irish monk Deicolus, founder of Lure. 613-625.

my staff shall replace thee, and be swineherd in thy absence." And thereupon he stuck his traveller's staff into the ground, round which the swine collected and lay down; upon which the two set out through the wood, the Irish monk and the Burgundian swineherd, and thus was discovered and taken possession of the site of the existing town of Lure, and of that great monastery of the same name, the abbot of which, eleven centuries after this adventure, was reckoned among the princes of the holy Roman empire.[1]

But Desle was not at the end of his difficulties. Near his new retreat was a little church, frequented by the shepherds and peasants of the neighbourhood, and served by a secular priest, who saw the arrival of the disciple of Columbanus in these regions with an evil eye: "This monk," he said, "will interfere with my living." And he told his hearers that this stranger was a magician, who hid himself in the wood that he might give himself up to his incantations, "and that he had come at midnight, under pretence of praying, to my chapel, the doors of which I had closed in vain: a single word from him sufficed to open them." The priest afterwards denounced him to Werfair, the lord of the place, asking him if he was disposed to allow a certain foreign monk to take possession of his chapel, without any one being able to put him out of it.

[1] See the article "Chapitres Nobles de Lure et de Murbach Réunis," in the *France Ecclésiastique* for the year 1788, p. 78.

With that brutal ferocity which constantly reappeared among these baptised barbarians, Werfair commanded that the stranger should be seized if possible, and that the punishment of castration should be inflicted on him. But before that impious order could be obeyed, he was himself suddenly seized with shameful and mortal sickness. His pious widow, in the hope of softening divine justice towards the soul of her husband, made a gift of all the land which surrounded the site of Lure to the monk who called himself the traveller of Christ, and numerous disciples soon came to live by his side a life of peace and prayer. Their pious solitude was one day disturbed, as has been already mentioned, by King Clotaire II., whose name perpetually recurs in the history of Columbanus and his disciples. As the king was one day hunting in a royal domain near Lure, a boar, pursued by the nobles of his train, took refuge in the cell of Desle. The saint laid his hand upon its head, saying, "Since thou comest to ask charity, thy life shall be saved." The king, when told of it by the hunters who had followed the animal, desired to see that wonder for himself. When he knew that the old recluse was a disciple of that Columbanus whom he had always honoured and protected, he inquired affectionately what means of subsistence the abbot and his companions could find in that solitude. "It is written," said the Irishman, "that nothing shall be wanting to those who fear God; we lead a poor

life, but with the fear of God it suffices for us." Clotaire bestowed upon the new community all the forests, pasturage, and fisheries possessed by the public treasury in the neighbourhood of Lure, which became from that time, and always remained, one of the richest monasteries in Christendom.[1]

Lure and Luxeuil were situated in the north of ancient Sequania, then included in the kingdom of Burgundy, of which, as well as Austrasia, Clotaire II. had become the master. The whole of that wide and beautiful district of Burgundy which retains its name, and which, to the west and east of the river Saone, has since formed the duchy, and particularly the county of Burgundy, was naturally the first to yield to the influence of Luxeuil. This

[1] "Cum monarches atque auriga Dei Columbanus. . . . Pedibus vehementer debilitari cœpit. . . . Bubulcus videns tam proceræ staturæ virum et antea invisi habitus veste circumdatum. . . . Ne paveas, frater: peregrinus ego sum; monachicum propositum gero. . . . Fustem meum constituo custodem vicarium. . . . Heu mihi! propter unum monachum jam hic vivere non possum. . . . Latitat quidam in hac silvula monachus quidam peregrinus, qui nescio quibus incantationibus utitur. . . . Placet tibi ut monachus quidam capellulam tuam sibi vindicet. . . . Idem membrum quod famulo Dei præcidi jussit mox illi in tumorem versum est. . . . Peregrinus sum pro Christo. . . . Curtem fiscumque regalem. . . . Crede mihi, quia ad charitatem confugisti, hodie vita non privaberis. . . . Rex subjunxit: Et unde, pater venerande, vivis, vel hi qui tecum sunt? . . . Pauperem vitam gerimus."—Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 95-99. This legend, written in the tenth century, and which contains very curious details of the spoliations to which the abbey was subjected under the last Carlovingians, adds that, before his death, Desle went to Rome to seek a privilege from the Holy See to oppose the rapacity of the Burgundians in the neighbourhood of his foundation, whose usurpations he feared, although admitting their liberality. But the mention made in this privilege of a Roman emperor in the seventh century sufficiently proves its falsehood.

district was, from the time of Columbanus, governed, or rather possessed, by a powerful family of Burgonde origin, whose connection with Columbanus and his disciples demonstrated once more the powerful influence exercised upon the Frank nobility by the great Irish monk. This house was represented by two brothers, who both bore the title of duke: the one, Amalgar, was duke of Burgundy to the west and north of the Doubs; the other, Waldelen or Wandelin, lived at Besançon, and his duchy extended to the other side of Jura, and as far as the Alps.[1] Waldelen and his wife suffered much from having no children to whom to leave their immense possessions. The renown of the first miracles and great sanctity of the Irish monk, who had established himself not far from Besançon, drew them to Luxeuil. They went to ask him to pray for them, and to obtain them a son from the Lord. "I will do it willingly," said the saint; "and I will ask not only one, but several, on condition that you give me the first-born, that I may baptise him with my

The ducal family of St Donatus and its foundations.

[1] The following table appears indispensable to explain the narrative:—

I. N., Burgundian noble.

II. Waldelen, duke at Besançon, married Flavia, from whom—		II. Amalgaire, duke in Burgundy, married Aquiline, from whom—		
III. Donatus, bishop of Besançon, founder of St Paul and of Jussamoutier. † 660.	III. Ramalen, duke after his father, restorer of Romain-Moutier.	III. Adalric, duke after his father.	III. Waldalen, first abbot of Beze. † about 680.	III. Adalsind, abbess of Bregille.

own hands, and dedicate him to the Lord." The promise was made, and the mercy obtained. The duchess herself carried her first-born to Luxeuil, where Columbanus baptised him, giving him the name of Donat (*Donatus*) in testimony of the gift which his parents had made of him to God. He was restored to his mother to be nursed, and then brought back to be trained in the monastery, where the child grew up, and remained until, thirty years
621. after, he was taken from it to be made bishop of Besançon. In that metropolitan city, where the exile of Columbanus had doubtless left popular recollections, Donatus, out of love for his spiritual father, established a monastery of men under the rule of
St Paul of Besançon. Columbanus, and dedicated to St Paul, as Luxeuil was to St Peter. He added, however, to the observance of the rule of the founder of Luxeuil, that of the rule of St Benedict, which was introduced about the same period at Luxeuil itself. He himself lived there as a monk, always wearing the monastic dress. Afterwards, with the help of his mother, and also in his episcopal city of Besançon, he originJussa-moutier. ated the monastery of Jussamoutier for nuns, giving them a rule in which that of St Cæsarius, which we have already seen adopted by Radigund at Poitiers, was combined with various arrangements borrowed from the rules of Columbanus and Benedict.[1] The

[1] "Utrique erant ex nobili Burgundiorum prosapia."—*Ancient Breviary of Besançon, printed in* 1489. "Matri ud nutriendum reddit. Qui post alitur in eodem monasterio. . . . Nunc usque superest eamdem

Latin of the preamble, which was written by Donatus himself, does honour to the school of Luxeuil. The daughters of Jussamoutier rivalled the monks of Luxeuil in zeal and fervour, but they asked expressly that the laws of *the two patriarchs* should be modified so as to suit the difference of sex. They do not seem, however, to have objected to any of the severities of Irish tradition, for we see with surprise in that version of the three rules adapted to their use, the penalty of fifty or even a hundred lashes inflicted upon these virgins for certain faults against discipline. The wiser and gentler rule of Benedict gained ground, notwithstanding, at each new manifestation of religious life.

Re-establishment of Romain Moutier. 646.

The younger brother of Donatus, Ramelen, who succeeded his father as Duke of Transjuran Burgundy, signalised his reverence for the memory of Columbanus by the foundation or reconstruction of the abbey of Romain-Moutier, in a pass on the southern side of Jura, consecrated to prayer, two centuries before, by the founder of Condat.[1] He introduced a colony from Luxeuil there: the ancient church, often rebuilt, exists still: it has served as a model

cathedram regens. . . . Pro amore B. Columbani ex ipsius Regula monasterium virorum construxit."—JONAS, *Vita S. Colomb.*, c. 22. HOLSTEIN, *Codex Regularum.* Compare MABILLON, *Præf. in IV. Sæc.*, § 125, and the *Vies des Saints de Franche-Comté*, vol. i. p. 186, and *Appendix*, n. 6, 7, and 8. Of the ancient abbey of St Paul, at Besançon, there remain only some fragments of the church, which have been transferred to the court of the library. The abbey of Jussamoutier is now a barrack for gens-d'armes.

[1] See before, vol. i. p. 487. "Pro amore beati viri Columbani."—JONAS, c. 22.

to an entire order of primitive churches, and the basis of an ingenious and new system, which characterises the date and style of the principal Christian monuments between Jura and the Alps.[1]

Abbey of Bèze.

We have said that the father of St Donatus had a brother, another lord, Amalgaire, whose duchy extended to the gates of Besançon. This last had two children, who, like their cousins, are connected with Luxeuil. The son, named Waldelen, like his uncle, was also intrusted to the care of Columbanus, and became a monk at Luxeuil, from whence his father took him to put him at the head
630. of the abbey of Bèze, which he had founded in honour of God, St Peter, and St Paul, between the Saône and the Tille, near a fountain still known and admired for the immense sheet of water which gushes from it, and to the east of a forest called the *Velvet Forest*, a name which preserves to our own days a trace of the impression produced by its thick verdure upon the admiring popular mind, at a time when the common mind seems to have been more observant than now of certain beauties. The new abbot carried the rule of Columbanus to

[1] *Histoire de l'Architecture Sacrée du* IV^e^ *au* X^e^ *Siècle dans les Anciens Evêchés de Genève, Lausanne et Sion*, by J.-D. BLAVIGNAC, 1853. This church was certainly built in the eighth century, when Pope Stephen II. consecrated it in 753, and commanded the abbey, where he had lived for some time, to be called *the Roman Monastery*, playing upon the name which it already bore in honour of its first founder, St Romain of Condat. It became in the tenth century a priory of Cluny. Compare the *Vies des Saints de Franche-Comté*, vol. i. p. 598, vol. iii. p. 27, and the cartulary of Romain-Moutier, published by the learned Baron de Gingins, in vol. xiv. of the *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire de la Suisse Romande*.

Bèze, and maintained it for fifty years in that sanctuary, which was long to hold its place in the first rank of French monasteries. When his eldest brother, who had succeeded to the duchy of his father, compromised in the civil wars of the time of Ebroïn, had to flee into Austrasia, Waldalen collected his property and joined it to that of the monastery. He offered an asylum there to his sister, Adalsind, for whom their father, Duke Amalgar, had also founded an abbey at Bregille, opposite Besançon on the right bank of the Doubs. But she could not long remain there; the annoyances she met with from the inhabitants of the surrounding country obliged her to leave a place in which neither the ancient authority of her father, nor her character of abbess, nor the proximity of an important city governed by her family, could protect her. This forced exile is a proof, among many others, of the obstacles and hostilities too often encountered by the Religious of both sexes, despite the protection of kings and nobles, amid the unsubdued races who had invaded the West.[1]

676.

Bregille, near Besancon.

656.

While the various members of the most powerful family of the two Burgundies testified thus their devotion to the memory and institute of Columbanus, the young and noble Ermenfried obeyed the same impulse upon a more modest scale, amid the half-pagan tribe of the Varasques, who, following the Burgonde invasion from the banks of the Rhine,

Ermenfried, at Cusance. 625-670.

[1] *Chronicon Beseunse*, ap. D'ACHERY, *Spicilegium*, vol. ii. p. 402.

occupied, a little above Besançon, a district watered by the Doubs, where the second abbot of Luxeuil, Eustace, had already attempted their conversion. Ermenfried, according to the custom of the Germanic races, had been *recommended* in his youth, along with his brother, to King Clotaire II., the friend and protector of Columbanus, who had received him into his house. His noble bearing, his varied knowledge, and modest piety, gained him the favour of this prince. Clotaire had, besides, intrusted his brother with the care of the ring which was his seal-royal, and had thus constituted him chancellor of his court. Ermenfried, recalled into his own country to receive the inheritance of a wealthy noble of his family, had found, in surveying his new possessions, a narrow little valley where two clear streams, uniting at the foot of a little hill, formed into a tributary of the Doubs, called the Cusancin, and where there had formerly existed, under the name of Cusance, a monastery of women. Contemplating this site, he was filled with a desire to raise the ruins of the abandoned sanctuary, and to consecrate himself there to the Lord. When he returned to the court of Clotaire, the new spirit which animated him soon became apparent. One day, when he appeared before the king with his silken tunic in disorder and falling to his feet, Clotaire said to him, "What is the matter, Ermenfried? What is this fashion of wearing thy tunic? Wouldst thou really become a clerk?" "Yes," an-

swered the Varasque, "a clerk, and even a monk; and I entreat you to grant me your permission." The king consented, and the two brothers immediately set out for their solitude. In vain their mother urged them to marry and perpetuate their race. Ermenfried went to Luxeuil to be trained for monastic life under Walbert, received there the monastic frock and the priesthood, and returned to Cusance, where he soon became the head of a community of thirty monks, which he subordinated completely to Luxeuil, and directed with gentle and active authority, while his brother, with whom he always lived in the closest union, provided for their temporal necessities. Ermenfried reserved the humbler labours for himself; he spent whole days in sifting the grain which the others thrashed in the barn. For he loved work and workers. On Sundays, in celebrating mass, he distributed to the people the *eulogies* or unconsecrated wafers, which then served for consecrated bread. When he perceived the hard hands of the ploughmen, he bent down to kiss with tender respect these noble marks of the week's labour. I have surveyed the annals of all nations, ancient and modern, but I have found nothing which has moved me more, or better explained the true causes of the victory of Christianity over the ancient world, than the image of this German, this son of the victors of Rome and conquerors of Gaul, become a monk, and kissing, before the altar of Christ, the hard hand of the

He kisses the hands of the ploughmen.

Gaulish husbandmen, in that forgotten corner of Jura, without even suspecting that an obscure witness took note of it for forgetful posterity.[1]

Colonies of Luxeuil in Rauracia.

Before we leave Sequania, let us ascend into the country of the Rauraques (the ancient bishopric of Bâle). There, on the banks of that deep and narrow gorge, hollowed by the Doubs in the very heart of the Jura, upon the existing boundary of Switzerland and Franche-Comté, at the spot where that river, having run since its source from south to north, makes a sudden turn towards the west, before doubling back to the south, and forms thus a sort of peninsula still called *the close of the Doubs*, we shall find the little town of St Ursanne. It originated in the choice which another disciple of Columbanus made of that wild country in order to live there in solitude. Ursicinus, which has been transformed into Ursanne, was probably Irish, since he left Luxeuil with Columbanus; but, like Gall and Sigisbert, he did not follow him into Italy; and, after having founded a little Christendom upon the fertile shores of the Lake of Bienne, he preferred to establish himself among the scarped rocks covered with firs which

St Ursanne.

[1] "Dives valde ac potentior cæteris. . . . Adulti traduntur ad palatium Clotario regi servituri. . . . Qui tradidit ei annulum suum, factusque est cancellarius in toto palatio. . . . Sinebat tunicam, quod Sericam vocabant, usque ad medias dependere tibias. . . . Quid est hoc, Ermenfrede? cur tunicam tuam fers taliter? Numquid clericus esse vis? . . . Et clericum me monachumque fieri opto. . . . Si vidisset aliquem operatorem aut pauperrimum crepatis manibus, non ante eulogias dabat quam . . . manus ipsas oscularetur."—EGILBERTUS, *Vita S. Ermenf.*, ap. BOLLAND., t. vii. Septemb., p. 120.

overlook the upper course of the Doubs. Climbing into the most inaccessible corners of these wild gorges, in search of their strayed cattle, the herdsmen one day discovered him, and told, on descending, that they had found at the top of the mountain a wan and emaciated man, like another St John Baptist, who most surely lived in community with the bears, and was supported by them. Thence, doubtless, arose the name of Ursicinus or Urson, which has replaced this monk's Celtic name. In this instance, as invariably through the annals of monastic extension, the great examples of mortification and spiritual courage, which excited the admiration and sympathy of some, raised the derision and hostility of others. A rich inhabitant of the neighbourhood drew the solitary to his house on pretence of hearing him preach; and having made him drink wine, to which he was not accustomed, the poor saint soon became uncomfortable and asked leave to withdraw. Then the perfidious host, with all his family, began to mock the monk with bursts of laughter, calling him glutton, drunkard, and hypocrite, and accusing him as such to the surrounding population. Urson cursed the house of the traitor, and returned to his solitude. This adventure brought no discredit upon him: far from that, he had many disciples, and the increasing number of those who would live like him, and with him, obliged him to leave the huts which he had raised upon the heights, and to build his convent at

the bottom of the pass and on the bank of the river. It is to be remarked that he had here an hospital for the sick poor, and kept baggage-cattle to bring them from a distance and through the steep paths of these mountains.[1]

St Germain de Grandval. 618-670.

The little monastery which our Irishman had founded was taken up and occupied after his death by another colony from Luxeuil, led by Germain, a young noble of Treves, who, at seventeen, in spite of king and bishop, had left all to flee into solitude. He was of the number of those recruits whose coming to enroll themselves at Luxeuil alarmed Abbot Walbert by their multitude. The latter, recognising the piety and ability of the young neophyte, intrusted to him the direction of the monks whom he sent into a valley of Raurasia, of which Gondoin, the first known duke of Alsatia, had just made him a gift. This valley, though fertile and well watered, was almost unapproachable: Germain, either by a miracle, or by labours in which he himself took the principal share, had to open a passage through the rocks which formed the approach of the defile. The valley took the name of Moustier-Grandval, after the monastery, which he long ruled, in conjunction with that of St Ursanne.

[1] "Velut alterum in deserto Joannem. . . . Traditio est ursum super divi speluncam radices et herbas attulisse. . . . Ut vino, cui minime assueverat, victus ludibrio exponatur. . . . Crebro repetitis poculis urget. . . . Gulæ et Bacchi voraginem . . . exsibilandum propinare."—*Compendium Vitæ S. Ursicini*, ap. TROUILLAT, *Monuments de l'Ancien Evêché de Bâle*, Porentruy, 1852, t. i. p. 42.

The abbot of Luxeuil, with the consent of his brethren, had expressly freed the monks whom he intended, under the authority of Germain, to people the new sanctuary, from all obedience to himself. In the surrounding country, the benevolent stranger, who died a victim to his zeal for his neighbour, was everywhere beloved. A new duke of Alsatia, Adalric, set himself to oppress the population, and to trouble the monks of Grandval in every possible way, treating them as rebels to the authority of his predecessor and to his own. He approached the monastery at the head of a band of Alamans, who were as much robbers as soldiers. Germain, accompanied by the librarian of the community, went to meet the enemy. At the sight of the burning houses, and of his poor neighbours pursued and slaughtered by the soldiers, he burst forth into tears and reproaches. "Enemy of God and truth," he said to the duke, "is it thus that you treat a Christian country? and do you not fear to ruin this monastery which I have myself built?" The duke listened without anger, and promised him peace. But as the abbot returned to Grandval, he met some soldiers upon his way to whom he addressed similar remonstrances: "Dear sons, do not commit so many crimes against the people of God!" Instead of appeasing, his words exasperated them; they divested him of his robes, and slew him as well as his companion.[1]

1 "Ex genere senatorum natus. . . . Locum uberrimum, infra saxo-

The body of this martyr of justice and charity was carried to the church which he had built at St Ursanne. In the interval between the death of the founder of the abbey, and that of the first martyr of the illustrious line of Columbanus, this remote monastery had already felt the influence of a third saint, who, without passing through Luxeuil, had nevertheless yielded to the power of Columbanus's genius and rule.

The Count Vandregisil.

600-670.

Vandregisil was born near Verdun, of noble and rich parents, allied to the two Mayors of the Palace, Erchinoald and Pepin of Landen, who governed Neustria and Austrasia under the authority of King Dagobert I., son and successor of that Clotaire II. who had been always so favourable to Columbanus and his disciples. This relationship had procured the young noble a favourable position in the court of the king, to whom he had been recommended in his youth. He became Count of the Palace, that is to say, judge of the causes referred to the king, and collector of the returns of the royal revenue. But power and ambition held no place in a heart which had already felt the contagion of the many great

rum concava. . . . Cernens abbas quod difficilis esset introitus eorum, cœpit saxorum dura manibus quatere, et valvæ utraque parte vallis patuerunt et sunt intrantibus patefactæ usque in hodiernum diem. . . . Inimice Dei et veritatis, ingressus es super homines Christianos! . . . Per totam vallem cernens tanquam a luporum morsibus vicinos laniari et domus eorum incendio concremari, flevit diutissime. . . . Nolite, filii mei, tantum nefas perpetrare in populo Dei."—Bobolèni, *Vita S. Germani*, ap. Trouillat, *Monuments de l'Evêché de Bâle*, t. i. p. 49-53, who has given a much more complete version of it than that of the *Acta* of Mabillon.

examples furnished by the Frank nobility. Refusing a marriage which his parents had arranged, he went to take refuge with a solitary upon the banks of the Meuse. Now the Merovingian kings had then interdicted the Frank nobles from taking the clerical or monastic habit without their permission, an interdict founded upon the military service due to the prince, which was the soul of the social organisation of the Germanic races. Dagobert therefore saw with great displeasure that a Frank, brought up in the royal court, and invested with a public charge, had thus fled, without the consent of his sovereign, from the duties of his rank. He ordered him to return. As Vandregisil very reluctantly approached the palace, he saw a poor man who had been thrown from his cart into the mud before the king's gates. The passers-by took no notice of him, and several even trampled on his body. The count of the palace immediately alighted from his horse, extended his hand to the poor driver, and the two together raised up the cart. Afterwards he went to Dagobert, amid the derisive shouts of the spectators, with his dress stained with mud; but it appeared resplendent with the light of charity in the eyes of the king, who, touched by his humble self-devotion, permitted him to follow his vocation, and forbade any one to interfere with him.[1]

[1] "Comes constituitur palatii. . . . Ardore parentum honoribus plurimis valde sublimatus. . . . Rex . . . pro eo quod ipsum ho-

When he was freed from this anxiety, Vandregisil went to the tomb of St Ursanne, which was situated on an estate belonging to his house, with which he enriched the monastery. He applied himself there by excessive austerities to the subdual of his flesh; struggling, for example, against the temptations of his youth, by plunging during the winter into the snow, or the frozen waters of the Doubs, and remaining there whilst he sang the psalms.[1] Here also he found the trace of Columbanus's example and instructions, which led him from the side of Jura across the Alps to Bobbio, where he admired the fervour of the disciples whom the great Irish missionary had left there. It was there, doubtless, that he conceived so great an admiration for the memory and observances of Columbanus, that he determined on going to Ireland to seek in the country of the founder of Luxeuil and Bobbio, the secrets of penitential life and the narrow way. But God, says one of his biographers, reserved him for the Gauls. After another long

minem Dei in juventute in suo ministerio habuisset, volebat eum inquietare pro eo quod sine sua jussione se tonsorasset. . . . Quidam pauperculus qui vehiculum ante portam ipsius regis demerserat. . . . De equo quem sedebat cum velocitate descendens, et pauperi manum porrexit, et ipsum plaustrum simul de loco levaverunt. Prospicientes vero multi qualiter se inquinaverat de luto deridebant. . . . Factus plus candens quam antea fuerat; pervenit in palatium regis et stabat ante eum et satellites ejus quasi agnus in medio luporum."—ACTA SS. O. S. B., tom. ii. p. 502-514.

[1] "Si quando in ipsa visione nocturna per titillationem carnis illusionem habuisset . . . . mergebat se in fluvium, et cum esset hyemis tempus in medio glacierum psalmodiam decantabat."—*Ibid.*, p. 506.

sojourn in Romain-Moutier, which had just been restored under the influence of the spirit of Columbanus, he went to Rouen, where Ouën, a holy and celebrated bishop, who had known him at the court of Dagobert, and whose youth had also felt the influence, so fertile even after his death, of Columbanus, then presided. The metropolitan of Rouen would not permit a man distinguished at once by his tried virtue and illustrious birth, to steal out of sight. It is thus that the biographer of St Germain describes to us how the abbot of Luxeuil had long sought a monk who was at once learned, holy, and of noble extraction, to preside over the colony of Grandval.[1] For it is evident that birth was a quality infinitely valuable to the founders of monastic institutions in these days, doubtless because it gave the heads of the community the *prestige* necessary to hold out, even in material matters, against the usurpation and violence of the nobles and great men whose possessions surrounded the new monasteries. Bishop Ouën, therefore, bestowed holy orders upon his old friend and companion, but without being able to prevent him from again seeking monastic life. He succeeded only in establishing Vandregisil in his own diocese, thanks to the munificence of the minister Erchinoald, who gave up a great uncultivated

[1] "Cœpit Waldebertus intra semetipsum tacitus cogitare si possit reperire de suis fratribus, ex genere nobili . . . qui ipsos monachos secundum tenorem regulæ gubernare et regere deberet."—TROUILLAT, op. cit., p. 52.

estate not far from the Seine to his kinsman, where the remains of an ancient city, destroyed in the Frank invasion, were still to be seen under the briars and thorns.

Colonies of Luxeuil upon the Seine.

Fontenelle. 648.

But the time of ruins was past: the hour of revival and reconstruction had come. In that desert place, Vandregisil built the abbey of Fontenelle, which was destined to occupy, under its proper name of St Vandrille, so important a place in the ecclesiastical history of France and Normandy. The holy queen Bathilde, her son, King Clovis II., and many noble Neustrians, added rich donations to that of Erchinoald, whilst a great number of others came to share cenobitical life under the authority of Vandregisil. He had to build four churches, amid their cells, to make room for their devotions. He was particularly zealous in imposing upon them, along with the exercise of manual labour, the absolute renunciation of all individual property, which was the thing of all others most likely to clash with the inclinations of the sons of soldiers and rich men. And, says the hagiographer, it was admirable to see him instruct those who heretofore had taken away the possessions of others, in the art of sacrificing their own. Aided by their labours, he planted on a neighbouring slope of good exposure the first vineyard which Normandy had known.[1]

[1] "Ansbertus . . . hortatu viri Dei B. Wandregisili vineam plantare et excolere cœpit."—*Vita S. Ansberti*, c. i. We shall afterwards speak of this Ansbert, also a monk at Fontenelle, after having been one of the principal officials at the court of Dagobert. Wandregisil built a

His task was not always without danger; one day when he was labouring with his pious legion, the keeper of the royal forest, a portion of which had been given to Vandregisil, furious to see his charge thus lessened, approached the abbot to strike him with his lance; but, as happened so often, just as he was about to strike, his arm became paralysed, the weapon fell from his hands, and he remained as if possessed, till the prayer of the saint whom he would have slain restored his faculties.[1] The royal foresters were naturally disposed to appropriate into personal estates the forests committed to their care, and which the kings only used occasionally for hunting. This was the cause of their animosity, which we shall often have to refer to, against the strangers endowed with such gifts who came to establish themselves there.

Opposition of the royal foresters.

Vandregisil, however, did not confine his activity to the foundation and government of his abbey. Fontenelle was situated in the country of Caux, that is, the land of the Caletes, who had been distinguished by the energy of their resistance to Cæsar, and who had figured among the other tribes of

Conversion of the land of Caux.

fifth church at the top of this vineyard, dedicated to St Saturnin, which was rebuilt about 1030, and is considered the most ancient edifice in the diocese of Rouen, and one of the most curious in Normandy.

[1] The chapel of Notre Dame de Caillouville, built upon the spot where this incident happened, was still existing in the time of Mabillon. It was demolished after the Revolution by a man named Lhérondel. A fountain, visited every year by many pilgrims, is still to be seen there. At the bottom of the basin, cut in the stone, is a rude representation of St Radegund.

Belgian Gaul in the last struggle against the proconsul, even after the fall of Alise and the heroic Vercingetorix.[1] The land of Caux was then Christian only in name; the inhabitants had fallen back into complete and brutal barbarism. The abbot of Fontenelle went throughout the whole country, preached the Gospel everywhere, procured the destruction of the idols whom the peasants persisted in worshipping, and transformed the land to such an extent that the country people never met a priest or monk without throwing themselves at his feet as before an image of Christ.[2]

Vandregisil, when he died, left three hundred monks in his monastery, and a memory so popular that, four centuries after his death, his name was still celebrated by a grateful posterity in rhymes translated from the Latin into the vulgar tongue.[3]

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, book viii. c. 7. OROSIUS, lib. vi. c. 7 and 11.

[2] "Illuc nobilium liberi undique concurrere . . . ita ut *nobilium multitudo virorum communia cum omnibus possideret omnia*. . . . Si quispiam proprium aliquid usurpare tentaret . . . a cæterorum remotus concilio . . . plectebatur. . . . Sed et omnes Caletorum populi ita brutis ac belluis similes ante adventum illius in hac regione fuerant, ut præter Christianæ fidei nomen virtus religionis pene abolita in illis locis fuerat. . . . Ut qui antea arripiebant aliena postea largirentur propria." —*Vita Secunda*, c. 15-22.

[3] "Hic ille est Tetbaldus Vernonensis, qui multorum gesta sanctorum, sed et S. Wandregisili a sua latinitate transtulit atque in communem linguæ usum satis facunde retulit, ac sic ad quamdam tinnuli rhythmi similitudinem urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., sæc. iii. p. 1, p. 361. In *Vita S. Vulfram.* The abbey of Fontenelle, near Caudebec, took, like many others, the name of its founder, and was distinguished, during the eighth century, by a long line of saints. Up to 1790 it formed, with Jumiéges, one of the finest ornaments of the banks of the Seine. Now nothing remains of the four churches built by Vandregisil, the principal of which, the abbey church,

In one of the chapels of that abbey which attracted and charmed all travellers on the Seine from Rouen to the sea, rude seats were shown which had been used by the founder and his two most intimate friends, the archbishop Ouën, and Philibert, the founder of Jumiéges, when they came to Fontenelle, where these three converted nobles met in long and pleasant conferences, in which their expectations of heavenly joy, and terrors of divine judgment, were mingled with a noble solicitude for the triumph of justice and peace in the country of the Franks.[1]

St Philibert, founder of Jumiéges. 610-685.

Nothing, or almost nothing, remains of the architectural splendours of St Vandrille; but the ruined towers of Jumiéges still testify to the few travellers upon the Seine the magnificence of another abbey, still more celebrated, which was long the noblest

was magnificently rebuilt in the thirteenth century. In 1828 their ruins were still beautiful and admired: since then the owner, M. Cyprien Lenoir, has destroyed them by sapping; the stones of the mullions and pillars have been used to pave the neighbouring roads. An Englishman, more intelligent than the barbarous successors of the contemporaries of Dagobert, bought considerable fragments of these precious ruins, and conveyed them across the Channel to set them up in his park. The monastery, rebuilt and reformed under Louis XIV., by the congregation of St Maur, is still in existence, transformed into a spinning-mill. The cloister, a monument of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, is admired. See the *Essai sur St Vandrille*, by M. Langlois, and the learned and useful work, entitled *Les Eglises de l'Arrondissement d'Yvetot*, by M. l'Abbe Cochet, 1854, t. i. p. 49-73.

[1] "Monstrabantur . . . grabata et sedes ubi . . . considere soliti essent . . . quorum oratio non alia erat quam . . . de paradisi deliciis et gehennæ suppliciis . . . de justitia quoque . . . ac *patriæ* salute . . . et pace omnibus prædicanda."—*Vita*, c. 17. Another proof of the ignorance of those modern authors who have assumed the word and idea of *country* to be unknown in the middle ages.

ornament of that portion of Neustria to which the Normans have given their name, and which, like Fontenelle, is connected by means of its founder, St Philibert, with the work and lineage of Columbanus. The lives of these two founders show many analogies. Like Wandregisil, the young Philibert was *recommended* by his father to King Dagobert, and at twenty left the court and military life for the cloister. Like him, and still more directly than he, he was imbued with the spirit of Columbanus, having been a monk and abbot in the monastery of Rebais, which had its immediate origin from Luxeuil, before he went on pilgrimage to Luxeuil itself, to Bobbio, and the other communities which followed the Irish rule. He also had ties of friendship from his youth with St Ouën, the powerful archbishop of Rouen, and it was in the same diocese that he finally established himself, to build the great abbey which, like Fontenelle, was endowed by the gifts of Clovis II. and the holy queen Bathilde.

Philibert often visited his neighbour Wandregisil; he imitated him in working with his monks at the clearing of the conceded lands, which became fields and meadows of wonderful fertility, and like him he had to brave the animosity of the royal foresters, who stole his work-horses. Like Fontenelle, Jumiéges was built upon the site of an ancient Gallo-Roman castle, which was thus replaced by what contemporaries called "the noble castle of God." But situated upon the same banks of the Seine, and

on a peninsula formed by the winding of the river, the abbey of Philibert was more accessible by water, and soon became a great centre of commerce. British and Irish sailors brought materials for clothing and shoes to the Religious there in exchange for their corn and cattle. Philibert required that, in all these barters with neighbours or strangers, the bargain should be more profitable to the purchasers than if they were dealing with laymen. The monks had great success in the fishing of some species of porpoise (*cetacea*) which ascended the Seine, and which produced oil to lighten their vigils. They also fitted out vessels in which they sailed to great distances to redeem slaves and captives.

The monks of Jumiéges engage in commerce and navigation.

Doubtless a portion of these captives contributed to increase the number of the monks of Jumiéges, which rose to nine hundred, without reckoning the fifteen hundred servants who filled the office of lay-brothers. They were under a rule composed by Philibert after attentive observation of numerous monasteries of France, Italy, and Burgundy, which he had visited for that end. This was adopted by most of the communities which were then formed in Neustria in imitation of his, and of which Jumiéges became the centre where abbots and monks vied in seeking education or revival. It combined the instructions of the fathers of the desert, such as St Basil and St Macarius, with the precepts of the two great monastic patriarchs of the West, Benedict and Columbanus. But the influence

of Columbanus naturally predominated, in consequence of the early monastic education of Philibert and his long residence at Luxeuil and Bobbio. In the great church which he built for his abbey, the magnificence of which, attested by a contemporary narrative, amazes us, he raised an altar in honour of Columbanus, and of him alone among all the saints whose rules he had studied and practised.[1]

Philibert survived his friend, neighbour, and emulator, Wandregisil, nearly twenty years. He was succeeded by Aïchadre, a noble of Poitou, to whom belongs a legend written two centuries later, but which must be repeated here as a proof of the great numbers and angelical piety of the monks of the great Neustrian abbey. According to this tale, Aïchadre, who governed the nine hundred monks of whom we have before spoken, feeling himself on the eve of death, and fearing that after his death his monks might fall into the snares of sin, prayed the Lord to provide against it. The following

Death of the 450 elect at Jumiéges.

[1] *Vita S. Wandregisili*, c. 17; *Vita S. Philiberti*, c. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 20, 32. "Cum pro fratrum compendiis mandaret exerceri negotia, amplius dare jubebat quam dari a sæcularibus consuetudo poscebat. Et propter hoc gaudente vicino populo de labore justo sanctum exuberabat commercium."—C. 21. "Intrans . . . reliqua cœnobia sub norma S. Columbani degentia, atque omnia monasteria . . . ut prudentissima apis quidquid melioribus florere vidit studiis, hoc suis traxit exemplis. Basilii sancta charismata, Macarii regulam, Benedicti decreta, Columbani instituta sanctissima lectione frequentabat assidua. . . . Multa monasteria per ejus exemplum sunt constituta in Neustria. Confluebant ad eum sacerdotes Dei . . . et de ejus Regula sua ornabant cœnobia."—C. 5, 20. Compare *Vit. S. Aichadri*, c. 21. Philibert founded, besides Jumiéges, the abbey of Noirmoutier, in an island on the coast of Poitou, and that of Montivillers, for women, in the country of Caux.

night he saw an angel going round the dormitory of the Religious: this angel touched four hundred and fifty of them with the rod he held, and promised the abbot that in four days they should leave this life, and that when his turn was come, they should all come to meet him in heaven. The abbot having acquainted his brethren, prepared them for this happy journey. They took the viaticum together, and afterwards held a chapter with those of the community whom the angel had not marked. Each of the elect placed himself between two of these last, and all together chanted songs of triumph. The faces of those who were to die soon began to shine, and, without giving the least sign of pain, the four hundred and fifty passed from this life to the other: the first hundred at the hour of tierce, the second at sexte, the third at none, the fourth at vespers, and the last at compline. Their obsequies were celebrated for eight days; and those who survived them wept that they were not judged worthy to follow.[1] The mind of the ages of faith

[1] "Occurrent tibi qui præcesserunt fratres, cum psalmis suscipientes te. . . . Quarto igitur die, post missam, absoluti omnes communicabant, et osculantes se in pace, ibant cum patre ad domum capituli: et præposuit singulis custodes psallentes. Et resplendebant facies morientium, quasi resurgentium. Quidam moriebantur ad tertiam . . . et reliqui circa completorium, qui omnes erant Christo incorporati. . . . Remanentes etiam flebant quia relinquebantur: fuit tamen luctus lætificans propter spem gloriæ."—ACT. SS. BOLLAND., t. v. Septembr., p. 101. "Cœpit jam beata plebs tanquam in hora diei tertia ad finem properare dispositum, nullus parcens alteri, sed sicut senex ita et mediocris, et ut juvenis ita et puerulus. . . . Occubuit autem medietas hujus sanctæ familiæ."—MABILLON, *Acta SS. O. B.*, sæc. ii. t. ii. p. 930. According to another version, the 445 monks designated died in three days. This

was so formed that such narratives increased the number of religious vocations, and contributed to root the great monastic foundations deeply in the heart of the nations.

St Ouën and his brethren.

Bishop Ouën, whose influence and help had endowed the diocese of Rouen with the two powerful abbeys of Fontenelle and Jumiéges, was connected with Columbanus by a recollection of his earliest years. The great Irish monk was everywhere remarked by his love for children, and the paternal kindness he showed them. During his exile and journey from the court of the king of Neustria to that of Austrasia, he paused in a chateau situated upon the Marne, which belonged to a Frank noble,[1] the father of three sons named Adon, Radon, and Dadon, two of whom were still under age. Their mother led them to the holy exile that he might bless them; this benediction brought them happiness and governed their life. The whole three were, in the first place, like all the young Frank nobility, sent to the court of the king Clotaire II., and to that of his son Dagobert, who for some time reigned alone over the three Frank kingdoms. The eldest of the three brothers, Adon, was the first to break with the grandeurs and pleasures of secular life; he founded upon the soil of his own patrimony and upon a height which overlooked the

legend recalls that of St Gwennolé, founder of the abbey of Landevenec, in Brittany, which has been versified by a Breton poet of our days, M. Briseux, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 Octobre 1857, p. 886.

[1] He was named Autharis, and his castle, Eussy.

Marne, the monastery of Jouarre, which he put under the rule of Columbanus, and where he himself became a monk. Almost immediately after there was formed by the side of this first foundation another community of virgins, destined to become much more illustrious, and associated, a thousand years later, with the immortal memory of Bossuet. Foundation of Jouarre.

Radon, the second of the brothers, who had become the treasurer of Dagobert, imitated the elder, and consecrated his portion of the paternal inheritance to the foundation of another monastery, also upon the Marne, and which was called after himself Reuil (*Radolium*). There now remained only the third, Dadon, who afterwards took the name of Ouën (*Audoënus*), and who, having become the dearest among all the leudes of Dagobert and his principal confidant, received from him the office of referendary, or keeper of the seal by which, according to the custom of the Frank kings, all the edicts and acts of public authority were sealed. He, notwithstanding, followed the example of his brothers, and the inspiration which the blessing of Columbanus had left in their young hearts.[1] He sought among the forests which then covered La Brie a suitable site for the foundation which he desired to form and

[1] JONAS, *Vita S. Columbani*, c. 50. "Viri inclyti, optimates aulæ." —S. AUDOEN, *Vita S. Eligii*, i. c. 8. "Filii illustris viri Autharii, ex præclara Francorum progenie. . . . In proprio solo. . . . In patrimonio proprio. . . . In quo etiam monastica secundum B. Columbani Instituta una cum caterva . . . militavit. Gestans ejus annulum quo signabantur publice totius regni potiora signa vel edicta."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 14.

endow. He found it at last near a torrent called Rebais, a little to the south of the positions chosen by his brothers; it was a glade which was revealed to him for three successive nights by a resplendent cloud in the form of a cross. He built a monastery there which has retained the name of the torrent, although Ouën had at first given it that of Jerusalem, as a symbol of the fraternal peace and contemplative life which he had intended should reign there.[1] He also desired, like his brothers, to end his life in that retreat; but neither the king nor the other leudes would consent to it, and he had to remain for some time longer at the Merovingian court, until he was elected bishop (at the same time as his friend Eloysius) by the unanimous consent of the clergy and people.

And of Rebais. 628-638.

He exercised a sort of sovereignty at once spiritual and temporal thoughout the whole province of Rouen; for he had obtained from the King of Neustria a privilege by the terms of which neither

[1] "Desiderans illic haberi collegium pacis et unanimæ fraternitatis contemplationem. . . . Cum Rex et cuncti proceres Francorum illi nollent adquiescere."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 18, 19. Any ancient map of Champagne will show that the three monasteries of Jouarre, Reuil (reduced to the rank of a priory under Cluny) and Rebais, formed a sort of triangle between the Marne and the Morin. M. de Caumont has recently found in the subterranean church of Jouarre, which still exists, the inscription already published by Mabillon in honour of the first abbess of that celebrated community: "Hic membra post ultima teguntur | fata sepulcro beatæ | Theodiecheldis intemeratæ virginis genere nobilis meritis fulgens | strenua moribus flagrans in dogmate almo | Cenobii hujus mater sacratas Deo virgines | sumentes oleum cum lampadibus prudentes invitat | sponso filias occurrere X°. Exultat Paradisi in gloria."—*Bulletin Monumental*, t. ix. p. 186.

bishop, abbot, count, nor any other judge could be established there without his consent.[1] During the forty-three years of his rule, he changed the whole aspect of his diocese, covering it with monastic foundations, one of which, situated at Rouen itself, has retained his name, consecrated to art and history by that wonderful basilica which is still the most popular monument of Normandy. 639-683.

But Ouën had not left his beloved foundation of Rebais without a head worthy of presiding over its future progress. He desired to choose a ruler imbued with the spirit of that great saint whose memory remained always so dear to him.[2] He brought from Luxeuil the monk who seemed to him the best personification of the institute of Columbanus. It was Agilus, the son of that noble who had obtained the gift of Luxeuil for the Irish missionary from the Burgundian king. Like Ouën and his brothers, Agilus had been brought as a child to receive the blessing of Columbanus in his father's house, and was afterwards intrusted to the saint to be educated in the monastery, where he had adopted monastic life, and gained the affection and confidence of the whole community.[3] Associated with the mission of the successor of Columbanus among the pagan Warasques

St Agilus installed by St Ouën at Rebais. 636-650.

[1] LECOINTE, *Ann. Eccles.* ad ann. 681; H. MARTIN, ii. 163.

[2] "Qui S. Columbanum præstantissime dilexerat."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 24.

[3] See page 417 for an account of the father of Agilus, and the mission with which he was charged to King Thierry, after the first expulsion of Columbanus.

and Bavarians, his fame was great in all the countries under Frank dominion, and wherever he had been, at Metz, at Langres, and Besançon, he had excited universal admiration by his eloquence and the miraculous cures which were owing to his prayers. All these cities desired him for their bishop; but the monks of Luxeuil, above all, saw in him their future abbot. To bring him forth from that cloister which was his true mother-country, a written order of Dagobert was necessary, who made him first go to Compiègne, where he received him pompously in the midst of his court, and bestowed on him, with the consent of the bishops and leudes assembled at the palace, the government of the new abbey. Twelve monks from Luxeuil entered with him, and were soon joined by a great number of nobles, from the royal retinue and the surrounding country, to such an extent that Agilus had as many as eighty disciples, among whom was the young Philibert, who was to bear the traditions of Columbanus from Rebais to Jumiéges. All devoted themselves to the labours of cultivation and the duties of hospitality with that zeal which made the new monasteries so many agricultural colonies and assured shelters for travellers in these vast provinces of Gaul, which were thus finally raised from the double ruin into which Roman oppression and Barbarian invasion had thrown them.

Hospitality of Rebais.

The Irish who then flocked into Gaul on the steps of Columbanus, and who traversed it to carry the

tribute of their ardent devotion to Rome, willingly halted at the door of the monastery where they were sure of meeting a pupil or admirer of their great countryman; and Agilus refreshed them plentifully with the good wine of the banks of Marne, till he sometimes almost exhausted the provisions of the monastery. But a pleasant narrative shows us his watchful charity in a still more attractive light. It was evening, a winter evening; the abbot, after having passed the day in receiving guests of an elevated rank, was going over the various offices of the monastery; when he reached the *xenodochium*, that is, the almonry or hospice, specially destined for the reception of the poor, he heard outside a feeble and plaintive voice, as of a man who wept. Through the wicket of the door, and by the half light, he saw a poor man, covered with sores, lying upon the ground and asking admittance. Turning immediately to the monk who accompanied him, he cried, "See how we have neglected our first duty for these other cares. Make haste and have something prepared for him to eat." Then, as he had with him all the keys of the house, which the porter took to him every evening after the stroke of compline, he opened the postern of the great door. "Come, my brother," he said, "we will do all for thee that thou needest." The sufferings of the leper prevented him from walking, and the abbot himself carried him in upon his shoulders and placed him upon a seat by the side of the fire.

The poor traveller received in the twilight by Agilus.

Then he hastened to seek water and linen to wash his hands; but when he returned the poor man had disappeared, leaving behind him a delicious perfume which filled the whole house, as if all the spices of the East or all the flowers of spring had distilled their odours there.[1]

These sweet expansions of charity were allied, under the influence of the Rule of Columbanus, to the most masculine virtues, among the women as well as among the men. During that same journey from Neustria to Austrasia, the illustrious exile, before he reached the house of the father of St Ouën, had visited another family connected with theirs, which dwelt near Meaux, and the head of which was a powerful noble called Agneric, whose son Cagnoald had been a monk at Luxeuil from his childhood, and had accompanied the holy abbot in his exile. Agneric was invested with that dignity which has been translated by the title of *companion of the king;* and this king was Theodebert, to whose court Columbanus was bound. He received the

St Faron and his brothers.

612-672.

[1] "Per edictum Regis. . . . Fultus nitore procerum. . . . Per consultum Episcoporum et nostrorum optimatum. . . . Multi ex primoribus palatii atque proceribus patriæ . . . peroptabant sub illius regimine monachicam ducere vitam. . . . Veniens plebs ex Hibernia . . . ob B. Agili famam laudabilem quem isdem Columbanus . . . nutriverat. . . . Vini copiam . . . in magno vase imperat abbas totum fratribus ac plebi propinari. . . . Audivit . . . velut plangentis hominis exilem vocem. . . . Erat enim adhuc quiddam diei. . . . Aperta fenestra quæ portæ inhærebat. . . . Ecce quomodo . . . tanta negleximus: perge velocius et para ei refectionem. . . . Veni, frater. . . . Hiems quippe erat. . . . Tanta fragrantia jocundi odoris domum replevit, velut si. . . ."—*Vita S. Agili auctore subæquali*, c. 17, 20, 23, 24, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B. t. ii., p. 308.

glorious outlaw with transports of joy, and desired to be his guide for the rest of the journey. But before leaving, he begged Columbanus to bless all his house, and presented to him on that occasion his little daughter, who is known to us only under the name of Burgundofara, which indicates at once the exalted birth and Burgundian origin of her family,[1] as it were, *the noble baroness of Burgundy.* The saint gave her his blessing, but at the same time dedicated her to the Lord. History says nothing about the consent of her parents, but the noble young girl herself, when she had reached a marriageable age, considered herself bound by that engagement, and resolutely opposed the marriage which her brother wished her to contract. She became ill, and was at the point of death. In the mean time the abbot Eustace, the successor of Columbanus at Luxeuil, returning from Italy to give an account to Clotaire II. of the mission to his spiritual father with which the king had charged him, passed by the villa of Agneric. At sight of the dying girl, he reproached her father with having violated the engagement taken towards God by

[1] "Burgundiæ Farones vero, tam episcopi quam cæteri leudes."—FREDEGAIRE, c. 41, ap. D. BOUQUET, ii. 429. In chapter 44 he makes it a single word, *Burgundœfarones*, speaking of the Burgundian nobles met at the Council of Bonneuil. *Faron* comes, according to Dom Bouquet, from the word *fara*, which means *generation* or *line*, in *La Loi des Lombards*, v. iii. tit. xiv. Compare Paul the Deacon, lib. ii. c. 9. From this evidently proceeds the word *baron*, so long used to designate the leaders of the aristocracy in all the countries occupied by the Germanic tribes.

the saint whose blessing he had asked. Agneric promised to leave his daughter to God if she recovered. Eustace procured that recovery. But scarcely had he departed for Soissons, when the father, unfaithful to his promise, attempted again to constrain his daughter to a marriage which she resisted. She then escaped and took refuge in the Cathedral of St Peter. Her father's retainers followed her there, with orders to bring her away from the sanctuary, and threaten her with death. "Do you believe, then," she said to them, "that I fear death? make the trial upon the pavement of this church. Ah! how happy should I be to give my life in so just a cause to Him who has given His life for me!"[1] She held out until the return of Abbot Eustace, who finally delivered her from her father, and obtained from him a grant of land on which Burgundofara might found the monastery of Faremoutier, which was called by her name. Her example drew as many followers, among the wives

Burgundofara braves martyrdom to become a nun.

Faremoutier.

About 617.

[1] "Vir nobilis Hagnericus, Theodeberti conviva . . . et consiliis ejus grata. . . . Quæ infra infantiles annos benedicens eam Domino vovit." —JONAS, *Vita S. Columbani*, c. 50. "Accedens ad stratum puellæ, sciscitatur si suæ fuerit adsentationis quod contra B. Columbani interdictum post vota cœlestia rursus iteravit terrena. . . . Mortem me formidare putatis? In hoc ecclesiæ pavimento probate. . . . Quem (Agrestinum) Christi virgo non femineo more, sed virili confodit responsione."—*Ibid.*; *Vita S. Eustasii*, c. 1, 2, 14. The same Jonas wrote, during the lifetime of the Abbess Burgundofara, a series of anecdotes regarding the various nuns of the monastery, which throws great light upon the internal government of a great abbey of women in the seventh century. (ACT. SS. O. S. B., v. ii. p. 420). He carefully records the origin of all these nuns; among them we find one Saxon, probably come from England, which had then become Christian, or perhaps one of the prisoners of Clotaire.

and daughters of the Frank nobility, as her cousins had gained of their own sex, for their monasteries of Rebais and Jouarre. This corner of La Brie became thus a sort of monastic province dependent upon Luxeuil. Burgundofara lived there forty years, faithfully observing the Rule of St Columbanus, and maintaining it manfully against the perfidious suggestions of the false brother Agrestin, who attempted to engage her in his revolt against Eustace and the traditions of their common master. "I will have none of thy novelties," she said to him; "and as for those whose detractor thou art, I know them, I know their virtues, I have received the doctrine of salvation from them, and I know that their instructions have opened the gates of heaven to many. Leave me quickly, and give up thy foolish thoughts."

The eldest brother of Burgundofara, Cagnoald, was, as has been said, a monk at Luxeuil, and the faithful companion of Columbanus during his mission among the Alamans: he afterwards became bishop of Laon. His other brother, who, like his sister, has only retained for posterity the name of his rank—that of Faron, or Baron—was also a bishop at Meaux, the centre of the family domains. But before he adopted the ecclesiastical condition, he had distinguished himself in war, and taken a notable part in the victorious campaign of Clotaire II. against the Saxons. It is known how, according to the ordinarily received tradition, Clotaire

Cagnoald.

Faron.

disgraced his victory by massacring all his Saxon prisoners who were higher in stature than his sword. All that Faron could do was to save from the cruelty of his king the Saxon envoys, charged with an insolent mission to the king of the Franks, whom Clotaire had ordered to be put to death. Faron had them baptised, and said to the king, "These are no longer Saxons; they are Christians;" upon which Clotaire spared them. If one of his successors upon the see of Meaux, who two centuries later wrote his biography, may be believed, the glory of Faron eclipsed that of Clotaire himself in the popular songs which peasants and women vied in repeating, as happened to David in the time of Saul.[1] The generous Faron had again, according to the same author, to struggle with Clotaire on an occasion which should have left a lasting recollection in the grateful hearts of the poor. One day, when the "knight of God" ac-

He protects the Saxon envoys.

[1] "Ex qua victoria carmen publicum juxta rusticitatem per omnium pene volitabat ora ita canentium, feminæque choros inde plaudendo componebant:

'De Clothario est canere Rege Francorum,
Qui ivit pugnare in gentem Saxonum,
Quam graviter provenisset missis Saxonum,
Si non fuisset inclytus Faro de gente Burgundionum.

"Et in fine hujus carminis:

'Quando veniunt Missi Saxonum in terram Francorum,
Faro ubi erat princeps,
Instinctu Dei transeunt per urbem Meldorum,
Ne interficiantur a Rege Francorum.'"

—Hildegarii Meld. Episcop., *Vita S. Faronis*, c. 72-78. Compare Rettberg, t. ii. p. 394.

companied the king to the chase, a poor woman came out of the wood, and pursued the king with her complaints, explaining her great distress to him. Clotaire, annoyed, went off at a gallop. Faron, while escorting him, held a language in which we shall see the noble freedom of German manners employed in the service of charity and truth. "It is not for herself that this poor woman entreats you, but for you. Her wretchedness weighs heavily on her; but the responsibility of the royalty, which is intrusted to you, weighs still more heavily on you. She trusts her concerns to you, as you trust yours to God. She asks little of you compared to what you ask every day of God. How can you expect that he will listen to you, when you turn away your ear from this poor creature whom he has committed to your keeping?" The king answered: "I am pursued by such cries every day, and in all quarters; my ears are deafened by them; I am disgusted and worn out." Upon which he plunged into the wood and sounded his horn with all his might, to encourage the dogs. But some minutes after his horse stumbled, and the king hurt his foot seriously. Then he perceived that he had been wrong. The leude who spoke to him with so much Christian boldness was well qualified to be a bishop. He shortly after gave up his wife[1] and the world, and

He intercedes for a poor woman with Clotaire II. while they are hunting.

[1] See above, page 469, in the note upon the tonsure, the curious anecdote of this woman and her hair.

becoming bishop of Meaux, devoted his patrimony to found monasteries for the reception of those Anglo-Saxons who, recently converted, began to appear among the Franks, and whose daughters came in great numbers to take the veil at Faremoutier. He did the same for the Scots and Irish, for whom he had a particular regard, and in whom he doubtless honoured, by a domestic tradition, the memory of their compatriot Columbanus.[1]

Other colonies of Luxeuil in Champagne.

To any who desire to study more closely the double action of the Irish emigrants and the colonies of Luxeuil in that portion of Frankish Gaul which has since been called l'Île de France and Champagne, St Fiacre, whom we have already seen occupied in transforming the wooded glades given him by the Bishop of Meaux into gardens, and cultivating there for the poor those vegetables which have procured for him, down to our own day, the title of patron of the gardeners,[2] should be pointed out as one of the Hibernians received by St Faron. Not far from him would be found another Irishman, St Fursy, who came to seek repose, as

The Irish St Fiacre. 640-670.

St Fursy.

[1] "Miles Christi cum eo equitans. . . . Non hæc paupercula tristi dolore clamat pro se, sed pro te. Quamvis illa angustetur lacrymabili corde, tibi angustandum est potius pro commisso regimine. Illa in te spem ponit humili prece pro se, et tu de propriis rebus in Deo pro te. . . Quomodo enim Maximus . . . quando suæ tibi commissæ pauperculæ nec etiam curas attendre. . . . Ad hæc rex: Omnium dierum accessus et subrecessus tali meas sollicitant aures nausea frequenter diverberatas, et ad hæc curandum continue animus sopitur lassatus. Tunc cornu curvo plenis buccis anheliter latratus canum acuit."—HILDEGARIUS, c. 81, 82, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 591.

[2] See page 376.

first abbot of Lagny-sur-Marne, from the fatigues of a life worn out by preaching, as well as troubled by that famous vision of heaven and hell, which appears with justice among the numerous legends of the middle ages which were forerunners of the *Divina Comedia*,[1] and from which he emerged with the special mission of denouncing, as the principal causes of the loss of souls, the negligence of pastors, and the bad example of princes.[2] Moutier-la-Celle, at the gates of Troyes, built upon a marshy island, more suitable for reptiles than men, by the abbot Frobert, who was so simple and childish as to rouse the derision of his brethren at Luxeuil, but who was intelligent and generous enough to consecrate all his rich patrimony to found the sanctuary built near his native town, should also be visited.[3] Farther off, to the east, we should see Hautvilliers[4] and Montier-en-Der, both sprung from the unwearied activity and fervent charity of Berchaire, an Aquitain noble, trained to monastic life under Walbert at Luxeuil, from whence he issued to become the fellow-labourer of the metropolitan of Rheims, and to gain for his works the generous and permanent assistance of the kings and all the high

St Frobert of Moutier-la-Celle, near Troyes. 643-673.

Berchaire. 636-685.

[1] OZANAM, *Des Sources Poétiques de la Divine Comédie*, 1845, p. 46.

[2] "Per negligentiam Doctorum, per mala exempla pravorum principum."—ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 291.

[3] One of the brethren having sent him for compasses, which were required for writing, he was sent back with a millstone on his shoulders, taking advantage of the double meaning of the word *circinus*, which, in monk Latin, meant at once *compass* and *millstone*.—*Vita S. Frodob.*, c. 7.

[4] See p. 363, the legend of the foundation of Hautvilliers.

nobility of Austrasia. He died, assassinated by a monk who was his godson, and whose insubordination he had repressed.[1]

Finally, upon the mountain which overlooks the episcopal city of Laon, celebrated for having up to that time resisted all the Barbarians who had successively besieged it, we should see the vast monastery erected by an illustrious widow, St Salaberga, whose father was lord of the *villa* of Meuse, situated near the source of the river which bears that name, and very near Luxeuil. While still young, but blind, she had owed the recovery of her sight to Eustace, the first successor of Columbanus at Luxeuil. She was married the first time because of her extreme beauty, but, becoming a widow almost immediately, and desirous of becoming a nun, was obliged to marry again to escape the jealous intervention of Dagobert, who, like all the Merovingian kings, was as slow to consent to the monastic vocation of the daughters and heiresses of his leudes as to that of their sons, and who insisted

St Salaberga at Laon.

610-655.

[1] "Tanquam athleta recentissimus militiæ gymnasium cœlestis. . . . Corporis quietis impatiens. . . . Regibus . . . ac regiæ dignitatis proceribus tam gratum acceptabilemque. . . . Palatii optimatis ita in cunctis affabilis. . . . Tam ea quæ sui juris . . . quam quæ ab ipsis Francorum primoribus obtineri poterant."—ADSON, *Vita S. Bercharii*, c. 7, 11, 12, 13. This life, written by one of St Berchaire's successors at Montier-en-Der, is one of the most interesting works in the great collection of *Acta* brought together by D'Achery and Mabillon, although it has not the weight of a contemporary production. An excellent work, entitled *Les Moines du Der*, by M. l'Abbe Bouillevaux, has been written upon this abbey. The abbatial church, which is still existing, is one of the finest monastic churches in France.

upon their speedy marriage to nobles of the same rank. But, at a later period, owing to the influence of Walbert, the successor of Eustace, she was enabled, at the same time as her husband, to embrace monastic life, and for ten years ruled the three hundred handmaids of Christ who collected under her wing, most of whom came like herself from the noble race of the Sicambrians, as the hagiographers of the seventh century delight to prove, in speaking of the male and female saints whose lives they relate.[1]

Colonies of Luxeuil in Ponthieu.

It would, however, be a grave error to believe that the nobility alone were called, among the Franks and Gallo-Romans, to fill up the monastic ranks, and preside over the new foundations which distinguished every year of the Merovingian period. Luxeuil and its colonies furnished more than one proof to the contrary. A little shepherd of Auvergne, named Walaric, which has been softened into Valery, roused by the example of the noble children of the neighbourhood who went to schools, asked one of their teachers to make him out an alphabet, and found means, as he kept his father's sheep, to learn not only his letters, but the entire Psalter. From thence to the cloister the transition was easy. But after having lived in two different

The shepherd Valery,

[1] "Erat enim decora venustaque vultu. . . . Metuens ne ob filiam iram regis sævitiamque incurreret. . . . Jam enim opinio ejus ad aures regias pervenerat. . . . Ipse ex Sicambrorum prosapia spectabili ortus . . . Inter cæteras nobilium Sicambrorum feminas."—*Vita S. Salabergæ, auctore coævo*, c. 6, 9, 17.

monasteries, he felt himself drawn towards the great abbey from which the fame of Columbanus shone over all Gaul. He was received there and intrusted with the care of the novices' garden. He succeeded so well in driving away the insects and worms, his vegetables were so wholesome and well-flavoured, his flowers so fresh and sweet, that Columbanus saw in this a mark of divine favour; and as the fervent gardener carried everywhere with him the perfume of these flowers, which followed him even into the hall where the abbot explained the Scriptures, Columbanus, delighted, said to him one day, "It is thou, my well-beloved, who art the true abbot and lord of this monastery." After the exile of the great Celt, Valery aided the new abbot Eustace to defend, by means of persuasion, the patrimony and buildings of the monastery against the invasions of the neighbouring population. But soon the missionary fever seized him. He obtained permission from Eustace to go and preach, following the example of their spiritual master, among the nations where idolatry still struggled with Christianity. He directed his steps to the environs of Amiens, upon the shores of the Britannic sea, in that portion of Neustria where the Salian Franks had chiefly established themselves. Guided by zeal and charity, he penetrated everywhere, even to the *mâls*, or judicial assizes, held, according to the custom of the Germans, by the count of the district. According to the unfailing habit of the monks and abbots of that time, he

Gardener at Luxeuil,

Missionary near Amiens,

appeared there to endeavour to save the unfortunate, who were condemned, from execution. The King of Neustria, Clotaire II., always favourable to those who came from Luxeuil, permitted him to establish himself at Leuconaüs, a place situated at the mouth of the Somme, where the high cliffs, bathed by the sea, seemed to the monks collected around him to be immense edifices, whose summits reached the sky. He made it a sort of maritime Luxeuil. He went out unceasingly to sow his missionary discourses, which exposed him to a thousand insults and dangers. Sometimes the idolaters, seeing the fall of their sacred oaks, threw themselves upon him with their axes and sticks, then stopped, disarmed by his calm intrepidity! Sometimes even the judges and priests of the country made him pay for their hospitality by rude and obscene jokes. To escape from their impure talk, he had to leave their roof and fireside. "I wished to warm my frame a little by your fire, because of the great cold," he said; "but your odious conversation forces me, still frozen, out of your house." He was, however, of extreme gentleness, and softened the observance of the rule, so far as concerned penances, with an indulgence which scarcely consisted with Celtic tradition. But his unpopularity lasted even after his death among a portion of the people whom he had undertaken to convert, as is proved by a little dialogue recorded by his historian. On the spot

Founder of Leuconaüs. 594-622.

Opposition which he met,

And which lasted after his death.

where he had cut down a tree venerated by the idolaters, at Aoust or Ault, upon the road to Eu, the Christian peasants raised an oratory consecrated to his memory; but the women of the old Frank races, passing before that modest sanctuary, still testified their repugnance and scorn for the monastic apostle. "Dear mother," said a daughter to her mother, "would these people have us to venerate the man whom we used to see going about the country mounted on an ass, and miserably clad?" "Yes," answered the mother; "it is so; these peasants erect a temple in honour of him who did among us only vile and contemptible things."

The memory of Valery, thus scorned by his contemporaries, was nevertheless to grow more and more brilliant during the course of ages; and we shall see him on two solemn occasions receive the homage of the great princes who have founded the two greatest monarchies of Christendom, Hugh Capet and William the Conqueror.[1]

[1] "Oviculas patris sui per pascua circumagens. . . . Depoposcit ut sibi alphabetum scriberet. . . . Cuncta virentia, jocunda, amœna atque intacta conspiciens. . . . Odorem magnæ fragrantiæ et mirandæ suavitatis. . . . Tu es merito abbas monasterii et senior, mihi, diligende. . . . Ubi quidam comes . . . juxta morem sæculi concioni præsidebat, quod rustici *mallum* vocant. . . . Volui propter rigorem frigoris . . . immo nunc exire non calefactus a vobis compellor. . . . Pars quæ super scopulos et ingentia saxa ab imis ad summa erigitur, aularum vel ædium fabricam in excelsa aeris fastigia . . . mundo vel vicinæ regioni præbet spectaculum. . . . Illa quæ ex his prior esse videbatur contemnens. . . . Filia cum indignatione. . . . Dulcissima genitrix, numquid illo in loco habitatores venerari conantur illum quem ante hos annos asello insidentem despicabili habitu cernebamus? Huic vero, ut ais, filia, rustici volunt fieri memoriam cujus opera apud nos vilia et contemptu digna vide-

The inhabitants of Ponthieu (a name which from that period was borne by the country bordering the Somme, where Valery had established himself) seem to have had a decided objection to monks of the Irish school. Two of the first companions of Columbanus, arriving from Ireland along with him, and coming to preach in these regions, were overwhelmed with insults and ill usage. At the moment when they were about to be violently expelled from the place, a noble named Riquier came to their assistance, and received them into his house. In return for his hospitality they inspired him with love for all the Christian virtues, and even for monastic life; and that conquest indemnified them for their rebuff. Riquier became a priest and a monk, and himself began to preach to the populations who had given so bad a reception to his Irish guests. He succeeded beyond all his expectations, and made himself heard not only by the poor, whose miseries he consoled, but also by the rich and powerful, whose

St Riquier,

bantur."—*Vita S. Walarici*, c. 1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 28. The abbey of Leuconaüs became the town of St Valery-sur-Somme, one of the most prosperous ports of the Channel during the middle ages. This town is situated upon a height, forming a sort of island or promontory between the Somme and the sea. Defended on all sides by abrupt rocks, this isle had to be fortified to the south by an intrenchment, the remains of which are still visible, and which form a boulevard covered with grass, called the Chemin Vert. Tradition asserts this to have been the habitual walk of the abbot Valery, and that it was his footsteps which formed the path.—LEFILS, *Histoire de St Valery et du Comté de Vimeu*, Abbeville, 1858, p. 6. St Valery-en-Caux, now the chief town of the district of Seine Inferieure, owes its origin to the removal, by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, in 1197, of the relics of the holy founder of Leuconaüs.

excesses he censured severely. The greatest nobles of the country were favourable to him, including even the keepers of the royal forests, whose colleagues showed so much hostility to the monastic apostles on the banks of the Seine.[1] The success of his eloquence was also a triumph for charity; he devoted the numerous alms which were brought him to redeem captives, to relieve the lepers and other unfortunates who were attacked by contagious and disgusting diseases. After having extended his apostolic labours as far as the Britannic Isles, he returned to found in his own domains at Centule, north of the Somme, a monastery which was afterwards to take his own name, and become one of the most considerable monasteries of the Carlovingian period. In the mean time Dagobert, who had succeeded his father Clotaire II. in Neustria, went to visit him in his retreat, and invited him to come and take a place at his own table, among those *companions of the king* who formed, as is well known, the highest aristocracy among the Franks. Riquier accepted without hesitation; he took advantage of these occasions to tell the king the same truth which the other Franks had received so well at his hands. He reproved him with priestly freedom and authority, exhorted him not to pride himself on his honour or wealth; and to discourage the adulation of his courtiers; and asked him how he expected to stand at the day of judgment to answer for the

Founder of Centule. 625-645.

His intercourse with Dagobert.

See page 497.

many thousands of men who were intrusted to him, he who would have difficulty enough in rendering an account for his own soul? The young Dagobert received his instructions so well that he made the Abbot Riquier a special donation for the purpose of keeping up the lights of his church, in memory of that invisible light of Christian truth with which the voice of the monk had enlightened his soul.[1] Despite their incessantly renewed cruelties and unchristian manners, all the Merovingian kings at least listened to the truth, and even honoured those who did them the honour of speaking it to them boldly.

At no great distance from Ponthieu, and still in

[1] "A rusticis et popularibus illius loci . . . injuriis afflictos et opprobriis castigatos. . . . Durus invector potentibus . . . istorum superbiam severa castigatione reprimens. . . . Gislemarus, vir illustris. . . . Maurontus, habilis vir, et terrarum vel silvarum ad regem pertinentium servator. . . . Nec leprosos vel elephantiacos exhorruit. . . . Sacerdotali auctoritate libera voce castigavit; denuntians ei ne in sæculari superbiret potentia . . . ne vanis adulantium extolleretur rumoribus . . . et hoc magis timendo cogitaret, quia potentes potenter tormenta patiuntur . . . et qui vix sufficit pro se solo rationem reddere pro tantis millibus populi sibi commissi . . . qua castigatione rex ut fuit sapiens benigne suscepta, congaudensque ejus libera veritatis fiducia."—ALCUIN., *Vita S. Richarii*, c. 2, 5, 10, 11, 12. Compare *Chronic. Centulense in Spicilegio*, vol. ii. p. 295, and MABILLON, *Ann. Benedict.*, book ii. c. 60. A passage of Alcuin seems little in harmony with what is said in the *Chronicle of Centule* and by the Abbot Ingelram, in his *Vie Métrique*, in the eleventh century, concerning the illustrious birth of Riquier, but indicates, on the contrary, that he was, like Valery, of rustic origin: "Non tam nobilibus juxta sæculi parentibus ortus quam moribus honestus . . . ita ut in *rustica vita* quædam præsaga futura sanctitatis gereret," c. 1. But this statement is contradicted by other details, reported by Alcuin himself. Centule, under the name of St Riquier, now a little town of the Somme, has preserved its magnificent abbey church. Abbeville, the ancient capital of Ponthieu (*Abbatis-villa*), was a small holding of the abbey of Centule.

Colonies of Luxeuil among the Morins.

the country occupied by the Salian Franks, but higher up towards the north, upon the confines of the two Gaulish tribes of the Atrebates and Morins, we find another Luxeuil colony, reserved for a more brilliant destiny than any of those we have yet mentioned. Audomar, since called Omer, was the son of a noble from the neighbourhood of Constance, a city of Alamannia, which was subject, as has been already said, to the Austrasian royalty. Perhaps, in passing through this country, Columbanus had already instructed and won him: history gives us no information on this point, but proves that a little after the sojourn of the Irish apostle upon the banks of the Lake of Constance, the young Omer presented himself at Luxeuil, bringing his father with him, a very rare junction in monastic annals. Abbot Eustace admitted both among the number of his monks. The father remained there until the end of his life; the son left Luxeuil twenty years after to become bishop of Therouanne; he had been suggested to the choice of Dagobert and the Frank nobles by the bishop of Laon, himself formerly a monk of Luxeuil. The country of the Morins, of which Therouanne was the capital, had been in vain evangelised by martyrs, from the first introduction of the faith into Gaul: it had fallen back into idolatry; the few Christians who had been trained there, since the conquest and conversion of Clovis, were bowed down with coarse superstitions. The new bishop perceived that he needed

St Omer. 612-667.

637.

assistance to accomplish such a task. Some years after his consecration, he begged Abbot Walbert of Luxeuil to send him three of his former brethren, who had, like himself, come to Luxeuil from the banks of Lake Constance. He installed them in an estate situated on the banks of the Aa, and called Sithiu, which he had just received as a gift from a rich and powerful pagan noble whom he had baptised with all his family. This estate was a sort of island amid a vast marsh, which could scarcely be approached, save in a boat. There rose, at the same time, the celebrated abbey which at a later period took the name of St Bertin, after the youngest of the three monks sent from Luxeuil,[1] and upon a neighbouring height a little church, which has become the cathedral of the episcopal town, and is still known by the name of the apostle of Morinia. His body was deposited there after thirty years of apostolical labours and heroic charity, which changed the aspect of the entire province. It is round the cemetery intended for the reception of the monks of St Bertin that the existing town of St Omer has been formed.

Foundation of Sithiu.

Bertin, the countryman and relation of Omer,

[1] Of the two others, Mommolin was the first abbot of Sithiu, and afterwards succeeded St Eloysius in the see of Noyon. Ebertramnus was abbot of the monastery of St Quentin. The *Annales Benedict.*, lib. xvi. c. 56, contains a very curious miniature of the seventh century, in which St Mommolin is represented with the Scotch or Irish tonsure, which had been the object of so many disputes, and St Bertin with the Roman tonsure or *crown*, and holding the curved cross, which was then common to abbots and bishops.

St Bertin. 659-709.

vied with him in his zeal for preaching and the conversion of the diocese which had adopted him. The rule of St Columbanus and the customs of Luxeuil were observed in his monastery, where there were now two hundred monks, in all their severity; he exercised, like Columbanus himself, an irresistible influence over the nobles who surrounded him. Aided by their gifts, and the unwearied diligence of his monks, he at last succeeded, by successive elevations of the soil, in transforming the vast marsh in which he had established himself into a fertile plain. When he gave up the dignity of abbot, which he had held for fifty years, in order, according to the custom of most of the holy founders of those days, to prepare himself better for death, the great monastery which has immortalised his name, and produced twenty-two saints venerated by the Church,[1] had attained the height of its moral and material prosperity.[2] Of all

[1] Among these should be named the Armorican Winnoc, of royal race, a disciple of St Bertin, and founder of the monastery and town which bear his name—Berghes-Saint-Winnoc or Vinox. He died in 696.

[2] The Bollandists (vol. ii. Sept.; p. 549-630) have clearly elucidated all that belongs to the life of St Bertin and his various biographies. It may be observed that the abbey of Sithiu afterwards took the name of St Bertin, as happened to a number of important monasteries which were named from their founder, or from the saint whose relics were venerated there. Thus the name of Agaune was replaced by that of St Maurice, Condat by St Eugende (afterwards St Claude), Fontenelle by St Vandrille, Glanfeuil by St Maur, Leuconaüs by St Valery, Centule by St Riquier, Fleury by St Benoît-sur-Loire, Habend by Remiremont, &c. This abbey of St Bertin, at first called Sithiu, was the principal abbey of Artois, and the noblest ornament of the city of St Omer, the municipality of which destroyed it a few years ago, under pretence of giving work to the labourers.—Victor Hugo, *Guerre aux Démolisseurs*,

the swarms from the inexhaustible hive of Luxeuil, none were more productive or brilliant than that with which these four Alamans, brought from the frontiers of Helvetia to the shores of the North Sea, enriched the wild Morinian country. The heirs of Columbanus found themselves thus established upon the soil of Belgium, the Christian conquest of which was half to do over again, and half to begin. A noble part was reserved to them in this work, which they were careful not to fall short of.

The saints of Remiremont in the Vosges. 614-653.

The necessities of our narrative have led us far from Luxeuil to seek her distant colonies or scions: we must now return to her neighbourhood to point out the house which was perhaps the most illustrious of her daughters. Let us then re-enter that southern cluster of the Vosges which marks the boundaries of Austrasia and Burgundy, and where rise, not far from each other, the Moselle and the Meurthe, the Meuse and the Saone. Upon a mountain whose base is bathed by the clear and limpid waters of the Moselle, very near its source, amid forests which, a century ago, were still inhabited by bears,[1] and at a distance of some leagues north from Luxeuil, rose a castle belonging to the noble Romaric. This wealthy leude had seen his property confiscated and his father slain during the fratricidal struggle between the two

Romaric.

1852. Enough remains of this immense church to show the pious grandeur of past generations, and the stupid Vandalism of their descendants.

[1] The last bear killed at Remiremont was in 1709.

grandsons of Brunehault, Theodebert and Thierry; but after the death of the latter, he had recovered his vast patrimony, and occupied a high position at the court of Clotaire II., then sole master of the three Frank kingdoms.[1]

While living as a layman, this nobleman already practised all the virtues, when God willed, as the contemporary narrator tells, to recompense his knight for the valour which he had displayed in the struggles of the world, and to conduct him to the fields of celestial light.[2] Amatus, a monk of Luxeuil, noble like himself, but of Roman race,[3] came to preach in Austrasia. This Amatus, or Amé, had been almost from his cradle offered by his father to the monastery of Agaune, which, situated near the source of the Rhine, attracted the veneration and confidence of all the faithful of the provinces bordering that river. He had lived thirty years either at Agaune itself or in an isolated cell upon the top of a rock, which still overhangs the celebrated monastery, as if about to crush it. There this noble Gallo-Roman, always barefooted and clad in a sheep's skin, lived upon water and

Amatus.

[1] "Nobilis in palatio . . . clarissimis parentibus procreatus . . . in Lotharii regis palatio cum cæteris electus."—*Vita S. Romarici, auct. monacho subpari*, in ACT. SS. O. S. B., vol. ii. p. 399. "Qui primus inter nobiles fuerat apud Theodebertum habitus."—*Vita S. Eustasii, auct. coævo; ibid.*, p. 112.

[2] "Ineffabilis Deus, videns militem suum sub tenebrosis hujus sæculi bellis fortiter belligerantem, voluit illum ad lucidos producere campos."—*Ibid.*, p. 399.

[3] "Nobilibus natus parentibus, ex Romana oriundus stirpe, in suburbio Gratianopolitanæ civitatis."—*Vita S. Amati*, c. ii.; *ibid.*, p. 121.

barley-bread alone; the water gushing from a limpid fountain, which he had obtained by his prayers, was received in a little basin which he had hollowed and covered with lead; the barley was the produce of a little field which he cultivated with his own hands, and ground by turning a millstone with his arms, like the slaves of antiquity. This fatiguing labour was to him a preservative against sleep and the temptations of the flesh. Abbot Eustace of Luxeuil, returning from Lombardy after his fruitless mission to Columbanus, stopped at Agaune, and decided Amatus upon following him to Luxeuil. The gentleness of the anchorite, his eloquence, and even the noble and serene beauty of his features, won all hearts.[1]

Amatus was nominated by the monks of Luxeuil, on account of his eloquence, to bear the word of God into the Austrasian cities. Romaric received him at his table, and, during the repast, inquired of him the best way of working out his salvation. "Thou seest this silver dish," said the monk; "how many masters, or rather slaves, has it already had, and how many more shall it have still? And thou, whether thou wilt or not, thou art its serf; for thou possessest it only to preserve it. But an

[1] "In devexo celsissimi montis rupe . . . per obliqua montis saxosi inter periculosos scopulos . . . latitabat. Cisternam plumbeam. . . . Molam, quam tunc manu agebat, cum canenti ei fessis membris somnus obreperet . . . ut tentationem carnis vel somnum corporis per laborem molæ abigeret. . . . Serenus vultu, hilaris adspectu, præclarus et celer eloquio."—*Vita S. Amati*, p. 121.

account will be demanded of thee; for it is written, 'Your silver and gold shall rust, and that rust shall bear witness against you.' I am astonished that a man of great birth, very rich, and intelligent like thyself, should not remember the answer of the Saviour to him who asked him how he should attain eternal life: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and follow me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.'"[1] From that moment Romaric was vanquished by the love of God and the desire of heaven. He distributed all his lands to the poor, with the exception of his castle of Habend, freed a multitude of serfs of both sexes, and went to Luxeuil, taking with him all that remained of his wealth, to become a monk. When he presented himself to the abbot to have his hair cut, according to the rite of admission into the order, several of the serfs whom he had liberated appeared at the monastery for the same purpose. He gladly recognised his old servants, not only as brethren, but as superiors; for he sought the lowest occupations in the monastery, and surpassed all the brethren in his care for the cultivation of the gardens, where he learned the Psalter by heart as he laboured.[2]

Romaric, converted by Amatus.

[1] "Cumque jam mensa posita esset, cœpit inter epulas flagitare. . . . Cernis hunc discum argenteum; quantos iste dudum servos habuit, quantosque deinceps habiturus est. Et tu, velis, nolis, nunc servus suus es. . . . Ausculta paululum, vir bone: cum sis nobilitate parentum excelsus, divitiis inclytus, ingenioque sagax, miror, si non nosti," &c.—*Vita S. Amati*, p. 123.

[2] "Illos denique servulos quos dudum ministros habuerat, socios sibi

After some years' residence there, during which time his friendship with Amatus became intimate and affectionate, the two friends left Luxeuil, where, for some unknown reason, they had incurred the animadversion of Abbot Eustace. With his consent, however, they went together to the estate which Romaric had reserved to himself. The *Castrum Habendi*, as it was called, had been once a Roman fortress; the remains of a temple, statues, and some tombs, were still visible, as at Luxeuil, upon the height of a steep hill, situated between two valleys, the base of which was watered by two tributaries of the Moselle. They built a church there, placed as many as seven chapels upon the sides of the hill,[1] and afterwards founded there the greatest female monastery which had been seen in Gaul. Amatus took the government of it, but soon devolved it upon Romaric, and the house was called, after the latter, Remiremont.[2]

Founds Habend, or Remiremont. 620.

detondens plerosque adjunxit; et effectus est illorum subditus, quorum prius dominus præpotens fuerat. . . . Ut quidquid despicabile in monasterio agendum esset, ipse adsumeret. Hortorum tamen frequentius præ ceteris fratribus operator exsistens, psalmos jugiter tradebat memoriæ." —*Vita S. Romarici*, p. 400.

[1] See for these details the excellent *Etude Historique sur l'Abbaye de Remiremont*, by M. A. Guinot, curé of Contrexeville (Paris, 1859) one of the best monographs which have been published on a monastic subject.

[2] *Romarici Mons.* But the abbey of Remiremont bears, in early documents, the name of *Monasterium Habendense.* This first monastery, built by Amatus upon the *Holy Mount*, was destroyed by the Huns. Re-established by the Emperor Louis III. beyond the Moselle and at the foot of the mountain, it became the nucleus of the existing town of Remiremont. The nuns were afterwards changed into noble canonesses, but always under the rule of St Benedict. The abbess alone took the

In this celebrated abbey, which was immediately put under the rule of St Columbanus by its two founders, everything was established on a magnificent scale, owing to the influx of the nuns and the liberality of the Austrasian kings and nobles. Clotaire II. gave, at one time, the enormous sum of two hundred pieces of gold to the foundation of his ancient leude. Remiremont soon became for women what Luxeuil already was for men. The number of nuns permitted the *Laus perennis* to be organised by means of seven choirs, who alternately sang the praises of God in seven different churches or chapels. The fervour and regularity of all these virgins procured to the site occupied by their community the name of the *Holy Mount*, which it retained for some centuries.

Romaric, his daughter, and grandchildren.

Romaric directed it for thirty years. Before entering Luxeuil he had been married, and had three daughters; the two younger took the veil in the monastery of their father. The eldest, who had married without the consent of Romaric, and without a fortune, attempted to reclaim a portion

perpetual vows. The others could marry and return to the world. The proofs of nobility required before a candidate was admitted were so difficult that Remiremont was reckoned among the most illustrious chapters in Europe. To mark the difference between the different chapters of women in that age of decay, when the most venerable institutions of Catholic antiquity had lost the true meaning of their existence, they were named thus: the *ladies* of Remiremont, the *chambermaids* of Epinal, and the *laundresses* of Poussey: and that, notwithstanding that eight paternal and eight maternal quarterings were necessary for admission to Poussey. The abbess of Remiremont ranked as a princess of the Holy Empire, from the time of Rudolph of Hapsburg.

of her paternal inheritance. She sent to her father her first child, a girl, hoping that the heart of Romaric would soften, and that he would bestow on his grandchild what he had refused to his daughter. The grandfather received her with joy, but did not send her back, and had her trained by the nuns, whose abbess she afterwards became. Then the mother, having had a son, sent him, before he was even baptised, to his grandfather, still in the hope that he would make him his heir. But Romaric acted with him as with his sister; he kept the child, and left him no other inheritance than that of the abbatial dignity with which he was invested.[1]

Double monasteries.

For there were two monasteries at Remiremont, one for monks and the other for nuns, connected with each other, but with a special superior for each of the communities. This was also the case at Jouarre, at Faremoutier, and wherever there were great foundations for women. Sometimes, as at Remiremont, the abbot had the supreme government; sometimes, as we shall see in Belgium, it was the abbess. The prohibition of the Council of Agde, in 506,[2] had, by necessity of things, fallen

[1] "Expers hæreditariæ sortis absque patris consilio nupsit. . . . Sperans hoc modo elicere, quatenus hæreditatis pignus, quod sibi jure competebat hæreditario, restitueret puellæ. . . . Puerulum, quem post paulo pepererat, transmisit avo baptisandum, atque ad relictæ possessionis hæredem constituendum."—*Vita S. Adelphii*, ap. BOLLAND, t. iii. Sept., p. 818. "Nupsit nobilissimo splendidissimoque cuidam e Sicambrorum gente, cui Bithylinus nomen."—*Ibid.*, p. 811.

[2] "Monasteria puellarum longius a monasteriis monachorum, aut propter insidias diaboli, aut propter oblocutiones hominum, collocentur."—Can. 28.

into disuse. The ranks of that feminine clergy, whose sacrifice the Church praises in the liturgy, increased every day.[1] It was necessary at once to protect and guide the weakness of these spouses of Christ who had taken refuge in forests and deserts, surrounded by wild beasts or barbarous and semi-pagan tribes. In the seventh century, and still later, the Church did nothing but encourage that custom which disappeared in due time, and even before any scandal had pointed out the unsuitable nature of the arrangement, in those monastic annals where everything is spoken out with bold and minute frankness. To systematic enemies of Catholic discipline, and to sceptics who may be tempted to smile, let us recall the touching and noble spectacle, so much admired and praised a thousand years after the foundation of Remiremont, given by the solitaries of Port-Royal during their sojourn near the nuns of that celebrated valley. And a voice, which cannot be suspected, elsewhere bears witness thus: "The vicinity of the monasteries," says M. Michelet, "the abuses of which have certainly been exaggerated, created between the brethren and sisters a happy emulation of study as well as of piety. The men tempered their seriousness by sharing in the moral graces of the women. They, on their side, took from the austere asceticism of the men a noble flight towards divine things. Both, according to

[1] "Ora pro populo, interveni pro clero, intercede pro devoto femineo sexu."

the noble expression of Bossuet, helped each other *to climb the rugged path.*"[1]

This monastery of men, also placed under the rule of Columbanus by its two founders, was not the less on that account unfavourable to the spirit of the Irish rule. When Agrestinus attempted to organise among the numerous disciples of Columbanus an insurrection against the traditions of their master and the discipline of Luxeuil, he fell back upon Remiremont after he had been overcome by Eustace at the Council of Mâcon and repulsed by Burgundofara at Faremoutier. He was well received by Amatus and Romaric, who were already biased against the abbot of Luxeuil, and still better by their monks, who showed themselves unanimous in their repugnance to the institutions of Columbanus.[2] Fatal and numerous accidents, of which more than fifty of the Religious were victims, some torn by mad wolves or struck by lightning, others urged to suicide or violent deaths, were necessary to lead them back. All these misfortunes, happening in such rapid succession, appeared warnings from on high, and the disgraceful death of Agrestinus himself opened their eyes completely. Amatus and Romaric returned into communion with Eustace. The former continued to watch over the administration of the two houses,

Success of the schismatic Agrestin at Remiremont. 623-625.

[1] MICHELET, *Mémoire sur l'Education des Femmes au Moyen Age.* Read at the meeting of the Five Academies, May 2, 1838.

[2] "In contemptum regulæ B. Columbani. . . . Cum ad hoc jam omnes adspirarent ut contemptus pristinarum assentatores forent institutionum."—JONAS, *Vita S. Eustasii*, c. 13-15.

though he had given up their immediate direction. He was especially solicitous to root out from among these spiritual children the sin of individual property. "My dear and gentle brother," he said one day to a monk who passed near him, "I much fear that the cunning of the enemy has persuaded thee to something against the rule." And as the monk protested against this, Amatus took between his fingers the edge of the delinquent's cowl precisely at the spot where he had sewn in a piece of money with the intention of reserving it for his personal use. "What have you here, dear brother?" The monk, falling on his knees, cried, "Woe is me! I confess that I have stolen the third part of a denier of gold." According to the monastic spirit, it was a theft made from the community; but Amatus pardoned the culprit, saying to him, "Let him that stole steal no more." He condemned himself to make a public confession before his death, no doubt in recollection of his weakness towards the schismatic Agrestinus, and his struggles against his abbot at Luxeuil.[1] However, Amatus himself had retired into a grotto, closed up by a projecting rock, so low and so narrow that it could scarcely contain him. As in the case of St Benedict at Subiaco, a monk lowered down to him, by a cord

Penitence and death of Amatus.

[1] "Frater mi . . . vereor, dulcissime meus . . . Oram cucullæ tenens, utroque digito hinc inde complexus consutum infra trientem reperit. . . . Hoc ergo quod habes, frater mi? . . . Heu mihi! tremissem furatus sum. . . . Quoniam de quibusdam factis meis me oportet pœnitere et libet."—*Vita S. Amati*, c. 21-23.

from the top of the rock, the morsel of bread and glass of water on which he lived. This severe penance was not enough for him. When he was dying, upon a bed of ashes, he had the letter of the Pope St Leo to St Flavian, which contains a clear and complete exposition of Catholic doctrine upon the Trinity and Incarnation, read to him, as a last and solemn protest against every germ of schism. September 13, 627.

As for Romaric, who long survived both him and the pious Mactefleda, the first ruler of the sisters, he took all necessary precautions to insure the election of the abbess of his beloved monastery exclusively by her own community, and that this entire foundation should rely in temporal matters only on the king, and in spiritual affairs only on the pope. At the end of his life the old warrior regained his courage and the political part he had played of old. He had known, in the palace of the kings of Austrasia, the great and pious Pepin de Landen, whose son, Grimoald, had become all-powerful, as minister under King Sigisbert, and threatened beforehand the rights and even the life of the young heir of this prince. Prophetically warned of the projects entertained by the son of his old friend, Romaric, despite his age and presentiment of approaching death, descended from his mountain and took his way to the palace, which he had not seen for thirty years, to intimate the perils of the country to the king and nobles. He arrived in the middle of the night: Grimoald, on being in- Romaric and the minister Grimoald.

formed of his approach, went to meet him with lighted torches. At sight of his father's friend, of this old man of God, with his elevated and imposing height and solemn aspect, he thought he saw, says the historian, a supernatural apparition, and trembled. However, he embraced him with great respect. What passed between them has not been recorded. It is only known that Grimoald overwhelmed the old abbot with presents, and promised to do all that he wished. Three days after, Romaric, who had returned to the monastery, visiting for the last time, on his way, the cultivated lands which belonged to it, was dead, and buried beside Amatus, the master and friend who had led him to God by *the rugged path*.[1]

December 8, 653.

To complete this rapid glance over the extension of the great institute of Columbanus in Frankish Gaul in the seventh century, it has yet to be shown how, after having spread through both the Burgundies and Austrasia, and gaining Armorica, where the British Celts naturally adopted with cordiality the work of the Irish Celt,[2] it extended over Neustria, beyond the Loire, and as far as Aquitaine;[3]

[1] "Ad principis palatium . . . ut regi seu proceribus suis de periculo eorum vel casu venturo cavenda nuntiaret. . . . Vir magnificus Grimoaldus subregulus. . . . Surgens cum facibus accensis . . . . adspiciensque hominem Dei miræ magnitudinis, nescio quid tanquam angelicum seu cœleste signum se super eum vidisse contremuit. . . . Indeque remeans rura monasterii circuivit."—*Vita S. Romarici*, c. 11.

[2] LA BORDERIE, *Discours sur les Saints de Bretagne*, p. 23. However, few direct references to this adoption of the Columbanic rule by Armorican monasteries are to be found.

[3] See the *Vita S. Eustasii*, by JONAS, for the five monasteries

and for that purpose the foundation of Solignac, in Limousin, by St Eligius, must be specially told. It took place soon after the Council of Mâcon. Its illustrious founder, who had visited the principal monasteries in Gaul and had perceived that monastic order was nowhere else observed as it was in Luxeuil,[1] declared his desire to conform it absolutely to the plan and rule of the model abbey which he had found in the Vosges, and to which he placed it in direct subordination. But this great man belongs still more to the history of France than to that of the rule of Luxeuil. With him we touch upon a new phase of the Merovingian royalty, as with the apostles of Morinia we are brought in contact with the conversion of Belgium, and with the founder of Remiremont approach the accession and preponderance of the Pepins. New scenes open before us. To enter them, we must leave Luxeuil and Columbanus, of whom, however, we shall find elsewhere many a luminous and important trace.

St Eligius founds Solignac upon the model of Luxeuil. 631.

But before closing this chapter of our narrative, it is necessary to establish a result as unforeseen as undeniable. It seems that everything in the history we have just related ought to have secured the lasting preponderance of the rule and institute of Columbanus in the countries governed by the Franks.

Why was the rule of St Columbanus rejected, and replaced by that of St Benedict?

built in Berry and Nivernais, immediately after the Council of Mâcon, *ex regula B. Columbani.*

[1] See the passage quoted, p. 463. S. AUDOENI, *Vita S. Eligii*, book i. c. 21.

A popularity so great and legitimate, the constant favour of the Merovingian kings, the generous sympathy of the Burgundian and Austrasian nobility, the virtues and miracles of so many saints, the immense and perpetually renewed ramifications of Luxeuil and its offspring, all should have contributed to establish the ascendancy of a monastic law originated upon the soil of Gaul, and extended by representatives so illustrious;—all ought to have procured it a preference over that Italian rule, which was older, it is true, but the modest beginnings and obscure progress of which in Gaul have escaped the notice of history. This, however, was not the case. On the contrary, the rule of Columbanus was gradually eclipsed, and the rule of Benedict was introduced and triumphed everywhere, while still we cannot instance a single man above the ordinary mark, a single celebrated saint, who could have contributed to that surprising victory, by his personal influence, throughout the whole period which we have surveyed. This victory was complete half a century after the death of the founder of Luxeuil, and amid the daily successes and increasing popularity of his disciples. Among those disciples themselves, some of the first and nearest to his heart, such as his godson Donatus, had begun to combine the Benedictine precepts with his. The two monasteries which he had himself originated and dwelt in, Luxeuil and Bobbio,[1]

[1] MABILLON, *Præfat. in IV. Sæc.* We have already said that Ma-

under his own immediate successors, suffered or accepted its sway, and extended it through their colonies. The illustrious Eligius, while he formed his Limousin foundation in exact imitation of Luxeuil, took care to specify in its charter that the monks were to follow at the same time the rules of both the blessed fathers Benedict and Columbanus.[1] The same stipulation is found of more and more frequent recurrence in deciding what order was to be adopted in the colonies of Luxeuil.[2] In this great monastic enlistment, which was carried on among the flower of the Gallo-Frank population during the whole of the seventh century, it was Columbanus who raised the recruits and set them out on the march; but it was Benedict who disciplined them, and gave them the flag and the watchword. Where Columbanus sowed, it was Benedict who reaped. The Bene-

billon goes so far as to assert that Columbanus himself introduced the Benedictine rule at Bobbio, but without furnishing the least proof of his assertion.

[1] "Ea tamen conditione ut vos vel successores vestri tramitem religionis sanctissimorum virorum Luxoviensis monasterii consequamini, et regulam beatissimorum Patrum Benedicti et Columbani firmiter teneatis."

[2] Particularly at Hautvilliers, Bèze, Maurmunster, Corbie, and at the *Monasterium Fossatense*, near Paris, since so celebrated as St Maur-les-Fosses. In a charter of 641, the nuns of the latter house are described as living "sub regula S. Benedicti ad modum et similitudinem monasterii Luxoviensis."—*Annal. Benedict.*, lib. xii. c. 58. See also the charter of St Amand for the monastery of Barisy, near Laon: "Ubi cœnobium *sub regula Domni Benedicti seu Domni Columbani* constituere inchoavimus."—Ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 1044; and that of the Bishop of Châlons for Montier-en-Der: "Si tepide egerunt . . . *secundum regulam sancti Benedicti vel Domni Columbani* corrigantur."—*Ibid.*, t. iii. p. 570.

dictine rule was gradually and everywhere placed side by side with that of Columbanus, then substituted for his, until at length the latter dwindled further and further into distance, like an antique and respectable memory, from which life had ebbed away.

The Council of Autun recognises no rule but that of St Benedict.

At Autun, in 670, in the heart of that Burgundy of which Columbanus seemed destined to be the monastic legislator, in a council of fifty-four bishops, held by St Leger, who had himself lived at Luxeuil, six canons were given forth exclusively relative to monastic discipline; in which the observation and fulfilment, in all their fulness, of the precepts of the canons of the Church and the rule of St Benedict are enjoined upon all the Religious; and the Council adds: "If these are legitimately and fully observed by the abbots and monasteries, the number of the monks will always increase by the grace of God, and the whole world will be saved from the contagion of sin by their incessant prayers."[1] The Gallo-Frank Church thus proclaimed its unqualified adhesion to the rule which St Maur had brought from Latium a hundred and twenty years before: the great Irish monk had scarcely

[1] "De abbatibus vero vel monachis ita observare convenit, ut quidquid canonicus ordo vel regula S. Benedicti edocet, et implere, et custodire in omnibus debeant: si enim hæc omnia fuerint legitime apud abbates et monasteria, et numerus monachorum Deo propitio augebitur, et mundus omnis, per eorum orationes assiduas, malis carebit contagiis." The date of this Council is not certain: some place it in 665, others in 670 or 674. Mabillon inclines towards this latter date.

been fifty years dead, and already no mention is made either of his rule or his person.

How can we explain this complete and universal substitution of Benedictine influence for that of the Hibernian legislator, even in his own foundations; and that, we repeat, without the appearance of any mind of the highest stamp exclusively devoted to the traditions of Monte Cassino? Must it be attributed to the individual and national spirit, from which Columbanus either could not or would not completely separate himself? Was this the hidden vice which consumed the vitality of his work? No, certainly; for if this powerful individuality had inspired the least dislike, he could not have attracted, during his life, nor after his death, that myriad of disciples, more numerous, and especially more illustrious, than all those of Benedict.

We must then seek the reason of his failure elsewhere, and it is to be found, in our opinion, in the much closer and more intimate union of the Benedictine Rule with the authority of the Roman See. We have proved that neither in Columbanus nor among his disciples and offspring, was there any hostility to the Holy See, and we have quoted proofs of the respect of the popes for his memory. Nor had Benedict, any more than Columbanus, either sought or obtained during his lifetime the sovereign sanction of the Papacy for his institution. But long after his death, and at the very time when Columbanus was busied in

planting his work in Gaul, the saint and the man of genius who occupied the chair of St Peter, Gregory the Great, had spontaneously impressed the seal of supreme approbation upon the Benedictine Rule. This adoption of the work Gregory had preluded by the celebration of its author in those famous *Dialogues*, the popularity of which was to be so great in all Catholic communities. The third successor of Gregory, Boniface IV., in a council held at Rome in 610, and by a famous decree which we reproach ourselves for not having mentioned before, had condemned those who, moved more by jealousy than charity, held that the monks, being dead to the world and living only for God, were by that reason rendered unworthy and incapable of exercising the priesthood and administering the sacraments. The decree of this Council recognises the power of binding and loosing in monks lawfully ordained, and, to confound the foolish assumptions of their adversaries, quotes the example of St Gregory the Great, who had not been kept back from the Supreme See by his monastic profession, and of many others who under the monastic frock had already worn the pontifical ring. But it especially appeals to the authority of Benedict, whom it describes as "the venerable legislator of the monks," and who had interdicted them only from interference in secular affairs.[1] It proclaims anew, and on the

Decree of the Council of Rome in its favour.

610.

[1] "Sunt nonnulli stulti dogmatis. . . . Apostolici compar sedis B. Gregorius monachico cultu pollens ad summum nullatenus apicem con-

most solemn occasion, that the Rule of Benedict was the supreme monastic law. It impresses a new sanction upon all the prescriptions of him whom another pope, John IV., the same who exempted Luxeuil from episcopal authority, called, thirty years later, the *abbot of the city of Rome.*[1]

It is identified with the authority of the Holy See, and thus becomes the supreme rule.

Thus adopted and honoured by the Papacy, and identified in some sort with the authority of Rome itself, the influence of the Rule of St Benedict progressed with the progress of the Roman Church. I am aware that up to the seventh century, the intervention of the popes in the affairs of the Church in France was much less sought and less efficacious than in after ages; but it was already undoubtedly sovereign, and more than sufficient to win the assent of all to a specially Roman institution.

Without weakening the foregoing argument, another explanation might be admitted for the strange course of things which, in the space of a single century, eclipsed the Rule and name of Columbanus, and changed into Benedictine monasteries all the foundations due to the powerful missionary impulse of the Irish Apostle. The cause which produced in Western Christendom the supre-

scenderet. Alii quoque sanctissimi pretiosissimo monachorum habitu fulgentes nequaquam annulo pontificali suborbarentur.—Neque Benedictus monachorum præceptor almificus."—COLETTI *Concil.*, t. vi. p. 1355.

[1] "Et haud procul a nostris temporibus Benedicti abbatis istius Romæ hujus urbis."—Charter of exemption given to a female monastery at the request of King Clovis II. *Annal. Benedict.*, t. ii., Append., p. 688.

macy of St Benedict's institute over that of his illustrious rival, was most likely the same which made the Rule of St Basil to prevail over all the other monastic Rules of the East—namely, its moderation, its prudence, and the more liberal spirit of its government. When the two legislatures of Monte Cassino and of Luxeuil met together, it must have been manifest that the latter exceeded the natural strength of man, in its regulations relating to prayer, to food, and to penal discipline, and, above all, in its mode of government. St Benedict had conquered by the strength of practical sense, which in the end always wins the day.

One of those great rivers, which, like the Moselle or the Saone, have their source near Luxeuil itself, offers a meet symbol of the fate which awaited the work of St Columbanus. We see it first spring up, obscure and unknown, from the foot of the hills; we see it then increase, extend, grow into a broad and fertilising current, watering and flowing through vast and numerous provinces. We expect it to continue indefinitely its independent and beneficent course. But, vain delusion! Lo, another stream comes pouring onward from the other extremity of the horizon, to attract and to absorb its rival, to draw it along, to swallow up even its name, and, replenishing its own strength and life by these captive waters, to pursue alone and victorious its majestic course towards the ocean. Thus did the

current of Columbanus's triumphant institution sink into the forgotten tributary of that great Benedictine stream, which henceforward flowed forth alone to cover Gaul and all the West with its regenerating tide.

THE END.

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